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ORIGINES SACRÆ:

OR A

RATIONAL ACCOUNT

OF THE GROUNDS OF

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

PART OF ANOTHER BOOK UPON THE SAME SUBJECT,

LEFT UNFINISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

TOGETHER WITH

A LETTER TO A DEIST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

By the Right Reverend Father in God
EDWARD STILLINGFLEET, D.D.
LATE LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

A NEW EDITION.

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TO

HIS MOST HONOURED FRIEND AND PATRON

Sir ROGER BOURGOINE,

KNIGHT AND BARONET.

SIR,

IT was the early felicity of Moſes, when expoſed in an ark of Nilotic papyre, to be adopted into the favour of ſo great a perſonage as the daughter of Pharaoh: ſuch another ark is this vindication of the writings of that divine and excellent perſon expoſed to the world in; and the greateſt ambition of the author of it is, to have it received into your patronage and protection. But although the contexture and frame of this treatiſe be far below the excellency and worth of the ſubject (as you know the ark in which Moſes was put, *was of bulruſhes daubed with ſlime and pitch*), yet, when you pleaſe to caſt your eye on the matter contained in it, you will not think it beneath your favour, and unworthy your protection. For if

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truth be the greateſt preſent which God could beſtow, or man receive (according to that of Plutarch, Ὡς ἐθὲν ἀνθρώπῳ λαβεῖν μεῖζον, ἢ χαρίζεσθαι Θεῷ σεμνότερον ἀληθείας), then certainly thoſe truths deſerve our moſt ready acceptance, which are in themſelves of greateſt importance, and have the greateſt evidence that they come from God. And although I have had the happineſs of ſo near relation to you, as to know how little you need ſuch diſcourſes which tend to ſettle the foundations of religion, which you have raiſed ſo happy a ſuperſtructure upon; yet withal I conſider what particular kindneſs the ſouls of all good men bear to ſuch deſigns, whoſe end is to aſſert and vindicate the truth and excellency of religion. For thoſe who are enriched themſelves with the ineſtimable treaſure of true goodneſs and piety, are far from that envious temper to think nothing valuable but what they are the ſole poſſeſſors of; but ſuch are the moſt ſatisfied themſelves, when they ſee others not only admire, but enjoy, what they have the higheſt eſtimation of. Were all who make a ſhew of religion in the world really ſuch as they pretend to be, diſcourſes of this nature would be no more ſeaſonable, than the commendations of a great beauty to one who is already a paſſionate admirer of it; but, on the contrary, we ſee how common it is for men firſt to throw dirt in the face of religion, and then perſuade themſelves it

Plutarch. de Iſid. & Oſir.

it is its natural complexion: they repreſent it to themſelves in a ſhape leaſt pleaſing to them, and then bring that as a plea why they give it no better entertainment.

It may juſtly ſeem ſtrange, that true religion, which contains nothing in it but what is truly noble and generous, moſt rational and pleaſing to the ſpirits of all good men, ſhould yet ſuffer ſo much in its eſteem in the world, through thoſe ſtrange and uncouth vizards it is repreſented under: ſome accounting the life and practice of it, as it ſpeaks ſubduing our wills to the will of God (which is the ſubſtance of all religion), a thing too low and mean for their rank and condition in the world; while others pretend a quarrel againſt the principles of it, as unſatisfactory to human reaſon. Thus religion ſuffers, with the Author of it, between two thieves; and it is hard to define which is more injurious to it, that which queſtions the principles, or that which deſpiſeth the practice of it. And nothing certainly will more incline men to believe that we live in an age of prodigies, than that there ſhould be any ſuch in the Chriſtian world, who ſhould account it a piece of gentility to deſpiſe religion, and a piece of reaſon to be Atheiſts. For if there be any ſuch thing in the world as a true height and magnanimity of ſpirit, if there be any ſolid reaſon and depth of judgment, they are not only conſiſtent with, but only attainable by a true

generous ſpirit of religion. But if we look at that which the looſe and profane world is apt to account the greateſt gallantry, we ſhall find it made up of ſuch pitiful ingredients, which any ſkilful and rational mind will be aſhamed to plead for, much leſs to mention them in competition with true goodneſs and unfeigned piety. For how eaſy is it to obſerve ſuch, who would be accounted the moſt high and gallant ſpirits, to quarry on ſuch mean preys, which only tend to ſatisfy their brutiſh appetites, or fleſh revenge with the blood of ſuch who have ſtood in the way of that airy title, honour! Or elſe they are ſo little apprehenſive of the inward worth and excellency of human nature, that they ſeem to envy the gallantry of peacocks, and ſtrive to outvie them in the gaiety of their plumes; ſuch who are, as Seneca ſaith, *ad ſimilitudinem parietum extrinſecus culti*, who imitate the walls of their houſes in the fairneſs of the outſides, but matter not what rubbiſh there lies within. The utmoſt of their ambition is to attain *enervatam felicitatem qua permadeſcunt animi*, ſuch a felicity as evigorates the ſoul by too long ſteeping, it being the nature of all terreſtrial pleaſures, that they do Ἐκτήκειν καὶ ἀνυγραίνειν τὸ φρονεῖν, by degrees conſume reaſon, by effeminating and ſoftening the intellectuals. Muſt we appeal then to the judgment of Sardanapalus concerning the nature of felicity, or enquire of Apicius what temperance is?

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is? Or desire that Sybarite to define magnanimity, who fainted to see a man at hard labour?

Or doth now the conquest of passions, forgiving injuries, doing good, self-denial, humility, patience under crosses, which are the real expressions of piety, speak nothing more noble and generous than a luxurious, malicious, proud, and impatient spirit? Is there nothing more becoming and agreeable to the soul of man in exemplary piety, and a holy, well-ordered conversation, than the lightness and vanity (not to say rudeness and debaucheries) of those whom the world accounts the greatest gallants? Is there nothing more graceful and pleasing in the sweetness, candour, and ingenuity of a truly Christian temper and disposition, than in the revengeful, implacable spirit of such whose honour lives and is fed by the blood of their enemies? Is it not more truly honourable and glorious to serve that God who commands the world, than to be a slave to those passions and lusts which put men upon continual hard service, and torment them for it when they have done it? Were there nothing else to commend religion to the minds of men besides that tranquillity and calmness of spirit, that serene and peaceable temper which follow a good conscience wherever it dwells, it were enough to make men welcome that guest which brings such good entertainment with it. Whereas

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the amazements, horrors, and anxieties of mind which at one time or other haunt ſuch who proſtitute their conſciences to a violation of the laws of God, and the rules of rectified reaſon, may be enough to perſuade any rational perſon that impiety is the greateſt folly, and irreligion, madneſs. It cannot be then but matter of great pity to conſider that any perſons, whoſe birth and education hath raiſed them above the common people of the world, ſhould be ſo far their own enemies, as to obſerve the faſhion more than the rules of religion, and to ſtudy compliments more than themſelves, and read romances more than the ſacred Scriptures, *which alone are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation.*

But, Sir, I need not mention theſe things to you, unleſs it be to let you ſee the excellency of your choice, in preferring true virtue and piety above the ceremony and grandeur of the world. Go on, Sir, to value and meaſure true religion, not by the uncertain meaſures of the world, but by the infallible dictates of God himſelf, in his ſacred oracles. Were it not for theſe, what certain foundation could there be for our faith to ſtand on? And who durſt venture his ſoul, as to its future condition, upon any authority leſs than the infallible veracity of God himſelf? What certain directions for practice ſhould we have, what rule to judge of opinions by, had not God out of his infinite goodneſs

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neſs provided and preſerved this authentic inſtrument of his will to the world? What a ſtrange religion would Chriſtianity ſeem, ſhould we frame the model of it from any other thing than the word of God! Without all controverſy, the diſeſteem of the Scriptures upon any pretence whatſoever, is the decay of religion, and through many windings and turnings leads men at laſt into the very depth of atheiſm. Whereas the frequent and ſerious converſing with the mind of God in his word is incomparably uſeful, not only for keeping up in us a true notion of religion (which is eaſily miſtaken, when men look upon the face of it in any other glaſs than that of the Scriptures), but likewiſe for maintaining a powerful ſenſe of religion in the ſouls of men, and a due valuation of it, whatever its eſteem or entertainment be in the world. For though the true genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity (which is known by the purity and peaceableneſs of it) ſhould grow never ſo much out of credit with the world, yet none who heartily believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and that the matters revealed therein are infallibly true, will ever have the leſs eſtimation of it. It muſt be confeſſed, that the credit of religion hath much ſuffered in the age we live in, through the vain pretences of many to it, who have only acted a part in it for the ſake of ſome private intereſts of their own. And it is the uſual logic of Atheiſts,

Atheiſts, *Crimine ab uno Diſce omnes*, if there be any hypocrites, all who make ſhew of religion are ſuch; on which account *the hypocriſy of one age makes way for the atheiſm of the next.* But how unreaſonable and unjuſt that imputation is, there needs not much to diſcover, unleſs it be an argument there are no true men in the world, becauſe there are ſo many apes which imitate them; or that there are no jewels, becauſe there are ſo many counterfeits. And bleſſed be God, our age is not barren of inſtances of real goodneſs and unaffected piety; there being ſome ſuch generous ſpirits as dare love religion without the dowry of intereſt, and manifeſt their affection to it in the plain dreſs of the Scriptures, without the paint and ſetoffs which are added to it by the ſeveral contending parties of the Chriſtian world. Were there more ſuch noble ſpirits of religion in our age, atheiſm would want one of the greateſt pleas which it now makes againſt the truth of religion; for nothing enlarges more the gulf of atheiſm, than that Μέγα χάσμα, *wide paſſage*, which lies between the faith and lives of men pretending to be Chriſtians. I muſt needs ſay there is nothing ſeems more ſtrange and unaccountable to me, than that the practice of the unqueſtionable duties of Chriſtianity ſhould be put out of countenance, or ſlighted by any who own, profeſs, and contend for the principles of it. Can the profeſſion of that be honourable,

nourable, whoſe practice is not? *If the principles be true, why are they not practiſed? If they be not true, why are they profeſſed?*

You ſee, Sir, to what an unexpected length my deſire to vindicate the honour, as well as truth of religion, hath drawn out this preſent addreſs. But I may ſooner hope for your pardon in it, than if I had ſpent ſo much paper after the uſual manner of dedications, in repreſenting you to yourſelf or the world. Sir, I know you have too much of that I have been commending, to delight in your own deſerved praiſes, much leſs in flatteries, which ſo benign a ſubject might eaſily make one's pen run over in. And therein I might not much have digreſſed from my deſign, ſince I know few more exemplary for that rare mixture of true piety, and the higheſt civility together; in whom that ineſtimable jewel of religion is placed in a moſt ſweet, affable, and obliging temper. But although none will be more ready on any occaſion with all gratitude to acknowledge the great obligations you have laid upon me, yet I am ſo far ſenſible of the common vanity of *Epiſtles Dedicatory*, that I cannot ſo heartily comply with them in any thing, as in my hearty prayers to the Almighty for your good and welfare, and in ſubſcribing myſelf,

SIR,

June 5, 1662. Your moſt humble
and affectionate Servant,

ED. STILLINGFLEET.

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

IT is neither to ſatisfy the importunity of friends, nor to prevent falſe copies (which and ſuch like excuſes I know are expected in uſual prefaces), that I have adventured abroad this following treatiſe; but it is out of a juſt reſentment of the affronts and indignities which have been caſt on religion, by ſuch who account it a matter of judgment to diſbelieve the Scriptures, and a piece of wit to diſpute themſelves out of the poſſibility of being happy in another world. When yet the more acute and ſubtle their arguments are, the greater their ſtrength is againſt themſelves; it being impoſſible there ſhould be ſo much wit and ſubtlety in the ſouls of men, were they not of a more excellent nature than they imagine them to be. And how contradictious is it for ſuch perſons to be ambitious of being cried up for wit and reaſon, whoſe deſign is to degrade the rational ſoul ſo far below herſelf, as to make her become like the beaſts

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beasts that perish! If now the weight and consequence of the subject, and the too great seasonableness of it (if the common fame of the large spread of atheism among us be true), be not sufficient apology for the publishing this book, I am resolved rather to undergo thy censure, than be beholden to any other. The intendment therefore of this Preface, is only to give a brief account of the scope, design, and method of the following books, although the view of the contents of the chapters might sufficiently acquaint thee with it. How far I have been either from transcribing, or a design to excuse out of the hands of their admirers, the several writings on the behalf of religion in general, or Christianity in particular (especially Mornay, Grotius, Amyraldus, &c.), may easily appear by comparing what is contained in their books and this together. Had I not thought something might be said, if not more fully and rationally, yet more suitably to the present temper of this age, than what is already written by them, thou hadst not been troubled with this Preface, much less with the whole book. But as the tempers and geniuses of ages and times alter, so do the arms and weapons which Atheists employ against religion. The most popular pretences of the Atheists of our age, have been the irreconcileableness of the account of times in Scripture with that of the learned and ancient Heathen nations; the inconsistency of the belief of the Scriptures with the principles of reason; and the account which may be given of the origin of things, from principles of philosophy, without the Scriptures. These three therefore I have particularly set myself against, and directed against each of them a several book. In the first,

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firſt, I have manifeſted that there is no ground of credibility in the account of ancient times, given by any Heathen nations, different from the Scriptures, which I have with ſo much care and diligence enquired into, that from thence we may hope to hear no more of men before Adam to ſalve the authority of the Scriptures by, which yet was intended only as a deſign to undermine them; but I have not thought the frivolous pretences of the author of that hypotheſis worth particular mentioning, ſuppoſing it ſufficient to give a clear account of things, without particular citation of authors, where it was not of great concernment for underſtanding the thing itſelf. In the ſecond book I have undertaken to give a rational account of the grounds, why we are to believe thoſe ſeveral perſons, who in ſeveral ages, were employed to reveal the mind of God to the world; and with greater particularity than hath yet been uſed, I have inſiſted on the perſons of Moſes, and the prophets, our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and in every of them manifeſted the rational evidences on which they were to be believed, not only by the men of their own age, but by thoſe of ſucceeding generations. In the third book I have inſiſted on the matters themſelves, which are either ſuppoſed by, or revealed in the Scriptures; and have therein not only manifeſted the certainty of the foundations of all religion, which lie in the being of God and immortality of the ſoul, but the undoubted truth of thoſe particular accounts concerning the origin of the univerſe, of evil, and of nations, which were moſt liable to the Atheiſts exceptions, and have therein conſidered all the pretences of philoſophy ancient or modern, which have ſeemed

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ſeemed to contradict any of them; to which *(mantiſſæ loco)* I have added the evidence of Scripture-hiſtory in the remainders of it in Heathen mythology, and concluded all with a diſcourſe of the excellency of the Scriptures. Thus having given a brief view of the deſign and method of the whole, I ſubmit it to every free and unprejudiced judgment. All the favour then I ſhall requeſt of thee is, to read ſeriouſly, and judge impartially; and then I doubt not but thou wilt ſee as much reaſon for religion as I do.

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ORIGINES SACRÆ.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

The Obſcurity and Defect of Ancient Hiſtory.

I. II. III. IV. *The Knowledge of* Truth *proved to be the moſt natural Perfection of the rational Soul*; V. *Yet* Error *often miſtaken for Truth: the Accounts of it.* VI. *Want of Diligence in its Search*; VII. VIII. *The Mixture of Truth and Falſehood: thence comes either rejecting Truth for the Error's Sake, or embracing the Error for the Truth's Sake*; IX. *The firſt inſtanced in Heathen Philoſophers,* XIII. *The ſecond in vulgar Heathen.* X. XI. XII. *Of* Philoſophical Atheiſm, *and the Grounds of it.* XIV. *The Hiſtory of* Antiquity *very obſcure.* XV. *The Queſtion ſtated, where the true Hiſtory of ancient Times is to be found? in Heathen Hiſtories, or only in Scripture?* XVI. *The Want of Credibility in* Heathen Hiſtories *aſſerted and proved by the general Defect for Want of timely Records among Heathen Nations; the Reaſon of it ſhewed from the firſt Plantations of the World.* XVII. *The Manner of them diſcovered. The Original of* Civil Government. XVIII. *Of* Hieroglyphics.

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XIX. *The Use of* Letters *among the Greeks no older than Cadmus*; XX. *His Time enquired into: no older than Joshua:* XXI. *The Learning brought into Greece by him.*

BOOK I. 1.

ENQUIRIES after truth have that peculiar commendation above all other designs, that they come on purpose to gratify the most noble faculty of our souls, and do most immediately tend to advance the highest perfection of our rational beings. For all our most laudable endeavours after knowledge now, are only the gathering up of some scattered fragments of what was once an entire fabric, and the recovery of some precious jewels which were lost out of sight, and sunk in the shipwreck of human nature. That saying of Plato, *That all knowledge is remembrance, and all ignorance forgetfulness*, is a certain and undoubted truth; if by forgetfulness be meant the loss, and by remembrance the recovery, of those notions and conceptions of things, which the mind of man once had in its pure and primitive state, wherein the understanding was the truest microcosm, in which all the beings of the inferior world were faithfully represented according to their true, native, and genuine perfections. God created the soul of man not only capable of finding out the truth of things, but furnished him with a sufficient κριτήριον, or touchstone, to discover truth from falsehood, by a light set up in his understanding, which if he had attended to, he might have secured himself from all impostures and deceits. As all other beings were created in the full possession of the agreeable perfections of their several natures, so was man too; else God would have never closed the work of creation with those words, *And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good*; that is, endued with all those perfections which were suitable to their several beings; which man had been most defective in, if his understanding had not been endowed with a large stock of intellectual

Gen. i. 31.

intellectual knowledge, which is the most natural and genuine perfection belonging to his rational being. For reason being the most raised faculty of human nature, if that had been defective in its discoveries of truth, which is its proper object, it would have argued the greatest maim and imperfection in the being itself. For if it belongs to the perfection of the sensitive faculties, to discern what is pleasant from what is hurtful, it must needs be the perfection of the rational, to find out the difference of truth from falsehood: not as though the soul could then have had, any more than now, an actual notion of all the beings in the world co-existing at the same time, but that it would have been free from all deceit in its conceptions of things, which were not caused through inadvertency. CHAP. I.

II. Which will appear from the several aspects man's knowledge hath, which are either upwards towards his Maker, or abroad on his fellow-creatures. If we consider that contemplation of the soul which fixes itself on that infinite Being which was the cause of it, and is properly θεωρία, it will be found necessary for the soul to be created in a clear and distinct knowledge of him, because of man's immediate obligation to obedience unto him; which must necessarily suppose the knowledge of him, whose will must be his rule: for if man were not fully convinced, in the first moment after his creation, of the being of him whom he was to obey, his first work and duty would not have been actual obedience, but a search whether there was any supreme, infinite, and eternal Being or no; and whereon his duty to him was founded, and what might be sufficient declaration of his will and laws, according to which he must regulate his obedience. The taking off all which doubts and scruples from the soul of man, must suppose him fully satisfied, upon the first free use of reason, that there was an infinite Power and Being, which produced him, and on that account had a right to com-

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BOOK I.

mand him in whatſoever he pleaſed; and that thoſe commands of his were declared to him in ſo certain a way, that he could not be deceived in the judging of them. The clear knowledge of God will further appear moſt neceſſary to man in his firſt creation, if we conſider that God created him for this end and purpoſe, to enjoy converſe and an humble familiarity with himſelf; he had then ἔμφυτον πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν κοινωνίαν, in the language of Clemens Alexandrinus, *converſe with God was as natural to him as his being was*. For man, as he came firſt out of God's hands, was the reflection of God himſelf on a dark cloud, the iris of the Deity; the ſimilitude was the ſame, but the ſubſtance different: thence he is ſaid to be created after the image of God. His knowledge then had been more intellectual than diſcurſive; not ſo much employing his faculties in the operoſe deductions of reaſon (the pleaſant toil of the rational faculties ſince the fall), but had immediately employed them about the ſublimeſt objects; not about quiddities and formalities, but about him who was the fountain of his being, and the centre of his happineſs. There was not then ſo vaſt a difference between the angelical and human life: the angels and men both fed on the ſame dainties; all the difference was, they were in the ὑπερῶον, the upper room in heaven, and man in the ſummer parlour in paradiſe.

Clemens Protrept. p. 15. Ed. Sylburg. p. 21. Ed. Oxon. Potteri.

Gen. i. 26.

III. If we take a view of man's knowledge as it reſpects his fellow-creatures, we ſhall find theſe were ſo fully known to him on his firſt creation, that he needed not to go to ſchool to the wide world, to gather up his conceptions of them. For the right exerciſe of that dominion which he was inſtated in over the inferior world, doth imply a particular knowledge of the nature, being, and properties of thoſe things which he was to make uſe of; without which he could not have improved them for their peculiar ends. And from this knowledge did proceed the giving the creatures thoſe proper and peculiar names which were expreſſive

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expreſſive of their ſeveral natures. For as Plato tells us, οὐ πάνϑα δημιεργὸν ὀνομάτων εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἀποβλέποντα εἰς τὸ τῇ φύσει ὄνομα ἓν ἑκάστῳ, *the impoſition of names on things belongs not to every one, but only to him that hath a full proſpect into their ſeveral natures.* For it is moſt agreeable to reaſon, that names ſhould carry in them a ſuitableneſs to the things they expreſs; for words being for no other end but to expreſs our conceptions of things, and our conceptions being but εἰκόνες καὶ ὁμοιώματα πραγμάτων, as the ſame philoſopher ſpeaks, *the reſemblances and repreſentations of the things*, it muſt needs follow, that, where there was a true knowledge, the conceptions muſt agree with the things; and words being to expreſs our conceptions, none are ſo fit to do it as thoſe which are expreſſive of the ſeveral natures of the things they are uſed to repreſent; for otherwiſe all the uſe of words is to be a mere vocabulary to the underſtanding, and an index to memory, and of no further uſe in the purſuit of knowledge, than to let us know what words men are agreed to call things by. But ſomething further ſeems to be intended in their firſt impoſition; whence the Jews call it הבדלת המינים as Mercer tells us, *a ſeparation and diſtinction of the ſeveral kinds of things:* and Kircher thus paraphraſes the words of Moſes; *and whatſoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof:* i. e. ſaith he, *fuerunt illis vera & germana nomina, & rerum naturis propriè accommodata.* But however this be, we have this further evidence of that height of knowledge which muſt be ſuppoſed in the firſt man, that as he was the firſt in his kind, ſo he was to be the ſtandard and meaſure of all that followed, and therefore could not want any thing of the due perfections of human nature. And as the ſhekel of the ſanctuary was, if not double to others (as men ordinarily miſtake), yet of a full and exact weight, becauſe it was to be the ſtandard for all other weights (which was the cauſe of its being kept in the temple),

Plato in Cratylo. p. 269. Ed. Ficin.

Mercerus in Gen. ii. 19.

Kircher Oedip. Ægypt. tom. ii. claſſ. 2. cap. 1.

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BOOK I. so if the first man had not double the proportion and measure of knowledge which his posterity hath, if it was not running over in regard of abundance, yet it must be pressed down and shaken together in regard of weight; else he would be a very unfit standard for us to judge by, concerning the due and suitable perfections of human nature.

IV. But we need not have run so far back as the first man, to evince the knowledge of truth to be the most natural perfection of the soul of man; for even among the present ruins of human nature, we may find some such noble and generous spirits, that discern so much beauty in the face of truth, that to such as should enquire what they find so attractive in it, their answer would be the same with Aristotle's in a like case, it was τυφλῶ ἐρώτημα, *the question of those who never saw it*. For so pleasing is the enquiry, and so satisfactory the finding of truth after the search, that the relish of it doth far exceed the greatest epicurism of Apicius, or the most costly entertainments of Cleopatra; there being no gust so exquisite as that of the mind, nor any jewels to be compared with truth. Nor do any persons certainly better deserve the name of men, than such who allow their reason a full employment, and think not the erectness of man's stature a sufficient distinction of him from brutes. Of which those may be accounted only a higher species, who can patiently suffer the imprisonment of their intellectuals in a dungeon of ignorance, and know themselves to be men only by those characters, by which Alexander knew himself not to be a God, by their pronenes to intemperance and sleep. So strange a metempsychosis may there be without any change of bodies; and Euphorbus's soul might become a brute, without ever removing its lodging into the body of an ass. So much will the soul degenerate from itself, if not improved; and in a kind of sullenness scarce appear to be what it is, because it is not improved to what it may be.

But

CHAP. I. v.

But you will say, if this knowledge of truth be so great, so natural, so valuable a perfection of human nature, whence comes so much of the world to be over-run with ignorance and barbarism? whence come so many pretenders to knowledge, to court a cloud instead of Juno? to pretend a love to truth, and yet to fall down and worship error? If there were so great a sympathy between the soul and truth, there would be an impatient desire after it, and a most ready embracing and closing with it. We see the magnet doth not draw the iron with greater force, than it seems to run with impatience into its closest embraces. If there had been formerly so intimate an acquaintance between the soul and truth, as Socrates fancied of friends in the other world, there would be an harmonious closure upon the first appearance, and no divorce to be after made between them.

True; but then we must consider there is an intermediate state between the former acquaintance and the renewal of it, wherein all those remaining characters of mutual knowledge are sunk so deep, and lie so hid, that there needs a new fire to be kindled, to bring forth those latent figures, and make them again appear legible. And when once those tokens are produced of the former friendship, there are not more impatient longings, nor more close embraces between the touched needle and the magnet, than there are between the understanding and discovered truth. But then withal, we are to consider, that they are but few whose souls are awakened out of that lethargy they are fallen into in this degenerate condition: the most are so pleased with their sleep, that they are loth to disturb their rest; and set a higher price upon a lazy ignorance, than upon a restless knowledge. And even of those whose souls are, as it were, between sleeping and waking, what by reason of the remaining confusion of the species in their brains, what by the present dimness of their sight,

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BOOK I. and the hovering uncertain light they are to judge by, there are few that can put a difference between a mere phantaſm and a real truth. Of which theſe rational accounts may be given, viz. why ſo few pretenders to knowledge do light on truth.

VI. (1.) Firſt, *Want of an impartial diligence in the ſearch of it.* Truth now muſt be ſought, and that with care and diligence, before we find it. Jewels do not uſe to lie upon the ſurface of the earth: highways are ſeldom paved with gold; what is moſt worth our finding, calls for the greateſt ſearch. If one that walks the ſtreets ſhould find ſome ineſtimable jewel, or one that travels the road meet with a bag of gold, it would be but a ſilly deſign of any to walk the ſtreet, or travel the road, in hopes to meet with ſuch a purchaſe to make them rich. If ſome have happily light on ſome valuable truths, when they minded nothing leſs than them, muſt this render a diligence uſeleſs in enquiries after ſuch? No: Truth, though ſhe be ſo fair and pleaſing as to draw our affections, is yet ſo modeſt as to admit of being courted; and, it may be, deny the firſt ſuit, to heighten our importunity. And certainly nothing hath oftener forbid the banns between the underſtanding and truth enquired after, than partiality and preoccupation of judgment, which makes men enquire more diligently after the dowry than the beauty of truth; its correſpondency to their intereſts, than its evidence to their underſtandings. An uſeful error hath often kept the keys of the mind for free admiſſion, when important truths, but contrary to men's preconceptions or intereſt, have been forbidden entrance. Prejudice is the wrong bias of the ſoul, that effectually keeps it from coming near the mark of truth; nay, ſets it at the greateſt diſtance from it. There are few in the world that look after truth with their own eyes; moſt make uſe of ſpectacles of others making, which makes them ſo ſeldom behold the proper lineaments in the face of truth; which the

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the ſeveral tinctures from education, authority, cuſtom, and prediſpoſition, do exceedingly hinder men from diſcerning. CHAP. I.

Another reaſon why there are ſo few who find truth, when ſo many pretend to ſeek it, is, *that near reſemblance which error often bears to truth.* It hath been well obſerved, that Error ſeldom walks abroad the world in her own raiments; ſhe always borrows ſomething of Truth, to make her more acceptable to the world. It hath been always the ſubtlety of grand deceivers, to graft their greateſt errors on ſome material truths, to make them paſs more undiſcernible to all ſuch who look more at the root on which they ſtand, than on the fruits which they bring forth. It will hereafter appear how moſt of the groſſeſt of the Heathen errors have, as Plutarch ſaith of the Egyptian fables, ἀμυδράς τινας ἐμφάσεις τῆς ἀληθείας, *ſome faint and obſcure reſemblances of truth*; nay, more than ſo, as moſt pernicious weeds are bred in the fatteſt ſoils, their moſt deſtructive principles have been founded on ſome neceſſary and important truths. Thus idolatry doth ſuppoſe the belief of the exiſtence of a Deity; and ſuperſtition the immortality of the ſouls of men. The Devil could never have built his chapels, but on the ſame ground whereon God's temples ſtood; which makes me far leſs wonder than many do, at the meeting with many expreſſions concerning theſe two grand truths in the writings of ancient Heathens; knowing how willing the Devil might be to have ſuch principles ſtill owned in the world, which, by his depraving of them, might be the nouriſhers of idolatry and ſuperſtition. For the general knowledge of a Divine nature, ſuppoſing men ignorant of the true God, did only lay a foundation to erect his idolatrous temples upon; and the belief of the ſoul's ſurviving the body after death, without knowledge of the true way of attaining happineſs, did make men more eager of embracing thoſe rites

VII. (2.)

Plutarchus de Iſide et Oſiride, c. 9. Ed. Oxon.

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BOOK I. rites and ceremonies, which came with a pretence of ſhewing the way to a bleſſed immortality.

VIII. Which may be a moſt probable reaſon, why philoſophy and idolatry did increaſe ſo much together as they did; for though right reaſon, fully improved, would have overthrown all thoſe curſed and idolatrous practices among the Heathens; yet reaſon, only diſcerning ſome general notions, without their particular application and improvement, did only diſpoſe the moſt ordinary ſort of people to a more ready entertainment of the moſt groſs idolatry. For hereby they diſcerned the neceſſity of ſome kind of worſhip, but could not find out the right way of it; and therefore they greedily followed that which was commended to them, by ſuch who did withal agree with them in the common ſentiments of human nature: nay, and thoſe perſons themſelves who were the great maintainers of the ſublimer notions concerning God and the ſoul of man, were either the great inſtruments of advancing that horrid ſuperſtition among them, as Orpheus and Apollonius, or very forward compliers with it, as many of the philoſophers were. Although withal it cannot be denied to have been a wonderful diſcovery of divine Providence, by theſe general notions to keep waking the inward ſenſes of men's ſouls, that thereby it might appear, when divine revelation ſhould be manifeſted to them, that it brought nothing contrary to the common principles of human nature, but did only rectify the depravations of it, and clearly ſhew men that way which they had long been ignorantly ſeeking after. Which was the excellent advantage the Apoſtle made of the inſcription on the altar at Athens to the unknown God; *Whom*, ſaith he, *ye ignorantly ſerve, him I declare unto you.* And which was the happy uſe the primitive learned Chriſtians made of all thoſe paſſages concerning the Divine nature, and the immortality of the ſouls of men, which they found

Acts xvii. 23.

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found in the Heathen writers, thereby to evidence to the world that the main poſtulata, or ſuppoſitions of Chriſtian religion, were granted by their own moſt admired men; and that Chriſtianity did not raſe out, but only build upon thoſe common foundations, which were entertained by all who had any name for reaſon. CHAP. I.

IX. Though this, I ſay, were the happy effect of this building errors on common truths to all that had the advantage of divine revelation, to diſcern the one from the other; yet as to others who were deſtitute of it, they were liable to this twofold great inconvenience by it: Firſt, *for the ſake of the apparent rottenneſs of the ſuperſtructures, to queſtion the ſoundneſs of the foundations on which they ſtood.* And this, I doubt not, was the caſe of many conſiderative Heathens, who obſerving that monſtrous and unreaſonable way of worſhip obtaining among the Heathen, and not being able by the ſtrength of their own reaſon, through the want of divine revelation, to deduce any certain inſtituted worſhip, they were ſhrewdly tempted to renounce thoſe principles, when they could not but abhor the concluſions drawn from them; for there is nothing more uſual than for men who exceedingly deteſt ſome abſurd conſequence they ſee may be drawn from a principle ſuppoſed, to reject the principle itſelf for the ſake of that conſequence; which, it may be, doth not neceſſarily follow from it, but, through the ſhortneſs of their own reaſon, doth appear to them to do ſo. Thus when the intelligent Heathen did apparently ſee, that from the principles of the being of God, and the immortality of ſouls, did flow all thoſe unnatural and inhuman ſacrifices, all thoſe abſurd and ridiculous rites, all thoſe execrable and profane myſteries; out of a loathing the immoralities and impieties which attended theſe, they were brought to queſtion the very truth and certainty of thoſe principles which were capable of being thus abuſed. (1.)

And

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BOOK I.

X. And therefore I am very prone to ſuſpect the apology uſually made for Protagoras, Diagoras, and ſuch others of them who were accounted atheiſts, to be more favourable than true, viz. that they only rejected thoſe Heathen deities, and not the belief of the Divine nature. I ſhould think this account of their reputed atheiſm rational, were it any ways evident that they did build their belief of a Divine nature, upon any other grounds than ſuch as were common to them with thoſe whoſe worſhip they ſo much derided. And therefore, when the Heathens accuſed the Chriſtians of atheiſm, I have full and clear evidence that no more could be meant thereby than the rejection of their way of worſhip; becauſe I have ſufficient aſſurance from them, that they did believe in a Divine nature, and an inſtituted religion moſt ſuitable to the moſt common received notions of God, which they owned in oppoſition to all Heathen worſhip; which I find not in the leaſt pretended to by any of the forementioned perſons, nor any thing of any different way of religion aſſerted, but only a deſtruction of that in uſe among them.

XI. And although the caſe of Anaxagoras Clazomenius, and the reſt of the Ionic philoſophers, might ſeem very different from Diagoras, Theodorus, and thoſe before mentioned, becauſe although they denied the Gods in vulgar repute to be ſuch as they were thought to be (as Anaxagoras called the ſun μύδρον διάπυρον, *a mere globe of fire*, for which he was condemned at Athens to baniſhment, and fined five talents; yet the learned Voſſius puts in this plea in his behalf, that he was one that aſſerted the creation of the world to flow from an eternal Mind); although therefore, I ſay, the caſe of the Ionic philoſophers may ſeem far different from the others, becauſe of their aſſerting the production of the world (which from Thales Mileſius was conveyed by Anaximander and Anaximenes to Anaxagoras), yet to one that thoroughly conſiders what they underſtood by their eternal

Voſſ. de Idololat. c. i.

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eternal Mind, they may be ſooner cleared from the imputation of atheiſm, than irreligion: which two certainly ought in this caſe to be diſtinguiſhed; for it is very poſſible for men, meeting with ſuch inſuperable difficulties about the caſual concourſe of atoms for the production of the world, or the eternal exiſtence of matter, to aſſert ſome eternal Mind as the firſt cauſe of theſe things, which yet they may embrace only as an hypotheſis in philoſophy to ſolve the phenomena of nature with, but yet not to make this eternal Mind the object of adoration. And ſo their aſſerting a Deity, was only on the ſame account as the Tragedians uſed to bring in their Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, when their fables were brought to ſuch an iſſue, and perplexed with ſo many difficulties, that they ſaw no way to clear them again, but to make ſome God come down upon the ſtage, to ſolve the difficulties they were engaged in; or, as Seneca ſaith of many great families, when they had run up their genealogies ſo high, that they could go no further, they then fetched their pedigree from the Gods: ſo when theſe philoſophers ſaw ſuch incongruities in aſſerting an infinite and eternal ſeries of matter, they might by this be brought to acknowledge ſome active principle which produced the world, though they were far enough from giving any religious worſhip to that eternal Mind. CHAP. I.

XII. Thus even Epicurus and his followers would not ſtick to aſſert the being of a God, ſo they might but circumſcribe him within the heavens, and let him have nothing to do with things that were done on earth. And how uncertain the moſt dogmatical of them all were, as to their opinions concerning the being and nature of their Gods, doth fully appear from the large diſcourſes of Tully upon that ſubject; where is fully manifeſted their variety of opinions and mutual repugnancies, their ſelf-contradictions and inconſtancy in their own aſſertions; which hath made me ſomewhat inclinable to think, that the reaſon

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ſon why many of them did to the world own a Deity, was, that they might not be martyrs for atheiſm: Which Tully likewiſe ſeems to acknowledge, when ſpeaking of the puniſhment of Protagoras for that ſpeech of his; *De diis neque ut ſint, neque ut non ſint, habeo dicere: Ex quo*, ſays he, *equidem exiſtimo tardiores ad hanc ſententiam profitendam multos eſſe factos, quippe cum pœnam ne dubitatio quidem effugere potuiſſet.* So that, for all the verbal aſſerting of a Deity among them, we have no certain evidence of their firm belief of it, and much leſs of any worſhip and ſervice they owed unto it. And though, it may be, they could not totally excuſs the notions of a Deity out of their minds, partly through that natural ſenſe which is engraven on the ſouls of men; partly, as being unable to ſolve the difficulties of nature without a Deity; yet the obſerving the notorious vanities of Heathen worſhip, might make them look upon it as a mere philoſophical ſpeculation, and not any thing that had an influence upon the government of men's lives: for, as in nature, the obſerving the great mixture of falſehood and truth, made the Academics deny any certain κριτήριον, or *rule of judging truth*, and the Sceptics take away all certain aſſent; ſo the ſame conſequence was unavoidable here, upon the ſame principle. And that made even Plato himſelf ſo ambiguous and uncertain in his diſcourſes of a Deity; ſometimes making him an eternal Mind, ſometimes aſſerting the whole world, ſun, moon, ſtars, earth, ſouls, and all, to be gods, and even thoſe that were worſhipped among the Heathens, as Tully tells us out of his Timæus and De Legibus; which, as Velleius the Epicurean there ſpeaks, *Et per ſe ſunt falſa & ſibi invicem repugnantia.* This is the firſt inconvenience following the mixture of truth and falſehood, *for the ſake of the falſehood to queſtion the truth itſelf it was joined with.*

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 63.

XIII. (2.) The other is as great which follows, when truth and falſehood are mixed, *for the ſake of the truth to embrace*

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brace the falſehood; which is a miſtake as common as the other, becauſe men are apt to think, that things ſo vaſtly different as truth and falſehood could never blend or be incorporate together; therefore when they are certain they have ſome truth, they conclude no falſehood to be joined with it. And this I ſuppoſe to have been the caſe of the more credulous and vulgar Heathen, as the other was of the philoſophers; for they, finding mankind to agree in this, not only that there is a God, but that he muſt be worſhipped, did, without ſcruple, make uſe of the way of worſhip among them, as knowing there muſt be ſome, and they were ignorant of any elſe. And from hence they grew to be as confident believers of all thoſe fables and traditions on which their idolatry was founded, as of thoſe firſt principles and notions, from which the neceſſity of divine worſhip did ariſe. And being thus habituated to the belief of theſe things, when truth itſelf was divulged among them, they ſuſpected it to be only a corruption of ſome of their fables. This Celſus the Epicurean, on all occaſions, in his books againſt the Chriſtians did fly to. Thus he ſaith, the building of the Tower of Babel, and the confuſion of tongues, was taken from the fable of the Aloidæ in Homer's Odyſſey; the ſtory of the flood, from Deucalion; Paradiſe, from Alcinous's Gardens; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, from the ſtory of Phaeton. Which Origen well refutes, from the far greater antiquity of thoſe relations among the Jews, than any among the Greeks; and therefore the corruption of the tradition was in them, and not in the Jews: which muſt be our only way for finding out which was the original, and which the corruption, by demonſtrating the undoubted antiquity of one beyond the other; whereby we muſt do as Archimedes did by the crown of Hiero, find out the exact proportions of truth and falſehood which lay in thoſe heathen fables.

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Orig. c. Celſ. l. iv. p. 174, 179. Ed. Spencer.

And

BOOK I. XIV.

And this now leads to the third account, why truth is so hardly discerned from error, even by those who search after it, which is, *the great obscurity of the history of ancient times*, which should decide the controversy. For there being an universal agreement in some common principles, and a frequent resemblance in particular traditions, we must of necessity, for the clearing the truth from its corruption, have recourse to ancient history, to see if thereby we can find out where the original tradition was best preserved, by what means it came to be corrupted, and whereby we may distinguish those corruptions from the truths to which they are annexed: which is the design and subject of our future discourse, viz. 'to demonstrate 'that there was a certain original and general tra- 'dition preserved in the world concerning the oldest 'ages of the world; that this tradition was gradually 'corrupted among the Heathens; that, notwith- 'standing this corruption, there were sufficient re- 'mainders of it to evidence its true original; that the 'full account of this tradition is alone preserved in 'those books we call the Scriptures: that where any 'other history seems to cross the report contained in 'them, we have sufficient ground to question their 'credibility; and that there is sufficient evidence to 'clear the undoubted certainty of that history which 'is contained in the sacred records of Scripture.' Wherein we shall observe the same method, which Thales took in taking the height of the pyramids, by measuring the length of their shadow; so shall we the height and antiquity of truth from the extent of the fabulous corruptions of it: which will be a work of so much the greater difficulty, because the truth we pursue after takes cover in so great antiquity, and we must be forced to follow its most flying footsteps through the dark and shady paths of ancient history. For though history be frequently called the light of truth, and the herald of times, yet that light is so faint

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faint and dim, especially in heathen nations, as not to serve to discover the face of Truth from her counterfeit, Error; and that herald so little skilled, as not to be able to tell us which is of the elder house. The reason is; though Truth be always of greater antiquity, yet Error may have the more wrinkled face, by which it often imposeth on such who guess antiquity by deformity, and think nothing so old as that which can give the least account of its own age. This is evidently the case of those who make the pretence of ancient history a plea for infidelity, and think no argument more plausible to impugn the certainty of divine revelation, than the seeming repugnancy of some pretended histories with the account of ancient time reported in the Bible. Which being a pretext so unworthy, and designed for so ill an end, and so frequently made use of, by such who account infidelity a piece of antiquity as well as of reason, it may be worth our while to shew, that the Scriptures are no more liable to be baffled with reason, than to be confuted by antiquity. CHAP. I.

XV. In order therefore to the removing of this stumbling-block in our way, I shall first evince, *That there is no certain credibility in any of those ancient histories, which seem to contradict the Scriptures*, nor any ground of reason why we should assent to them, when they differ from the Bible: and then prove, that all those undoubted characters of a most certain and authentic history are legible in those records contained in Scripture. Whereby we shall not only shew the unreasonableness of infidelity, but the rational evidence which our faith doth stand on as to these things. I shall demonstrate the first of these, viz. that there is no ground of assent to any ancient histories, which give account of things different from the Scriptures, from these arguments; the apparent defect, weakness and insufficiency of them as to the giving an account of older times; the monstrous confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty of them in the account which they give; the evi-

BOOK I. dent partiality of them to themſelves, and inconſiſtency with each other. I begin with the firſt of theſe, the defect and inſufficiency of them to give ſuch an account of older times as may amount to certain credibility: which if cleared, will of itſelf be ſufficient to manifeſt the incompetency of thoſe records, as to the laying any foundation for a firm aſſent to be given to them. Now this defect and inſufficiency of thoſe hiſtories is either more general, which lies in common to them all; or ſuch as may be obſerved in a particular conſideration of the hiſtories of thoſe ſeveral nations, which have pretended higheſt to antiquity.

XVI. The general defect is, *The want of timely records to preſerve their hiſtories in.* For it is moſt evident, that the trueſt hiſtory in the world is liable to various corruptions through length of time, if there be no certain way of preſerving it entire. And that, through the frailty of memory in thoſe who had integrity to preſerve it; through the gradual increaſe of barbariſm and ignorance, where there are no ways of inſtruction; and through the ſubtilty of ſuch, whoſe intereſt it may be to corrupt and alter that tradition. If we find ſuch infinite variety and difference in men's accounts, as to the hiſtories of their own times, when they have all poſſible means to be acquainted with the truth of them; what account can we imagine can be given, where there was no way of preſerving to poſterity the moſt authentic relation of former ages? Eſpecially, it being moſt evident, that where any certain way of preſerving tradition is wanting, a people muſt ſoon degenerate into the greateſt ſtupidity and barbariſm; becauſe all will be taken up in minding their own petty concerns, and no encouragement at all given to ſuch public ſpirits, who would mind the credit of the whole nation. For what was there for ſuch to employ themſelves upon, or ſpend their time in, when they had no other kind of learning among them, but ſome general traditions conveyed from father to ſon, which might be learned by ſuch who

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who followed nothing but domeſtic employments? So that the ſons of Noah, after their ſeveral diſperſions and plantations of ſeveral countries, did gradually degenerate into ignorance and barbariſm: for, upon their firſt ſettling in any country, they found it employment ſufficient to cultivate the land, and make habitations to live in, and to provide themſelves of neceſſities for their mutual comfort and ſubſiſtence. Beſides this, they were often put to removes from one place to another, where they could not conveniently reſide; which Thucydides ſpeaks much of as to the ancient ſtate of Greece: and it was a great while before they came to embody themſelves together in towns and cities, and from thence to ſpread into provinces, and to ſettle the bounds and extents of their territories. The firſt age after the plantation of a country being thus ſpent, the next ſaw it neceſſary to fall cloſe to the work of huſbandry, not only to get ſomething out of the earth for their ſubſiſtence; but when by their diligence they had ſo far improved the ground, that they had not only enough for themſelves, but to ſpare to others, they then found out a way for commerce one with another by exchange. This way of traffic made them begin to raiſe their hopes higher, of enriching themſelves; which when ſome of them had done, they bring the poorer under their power, and reign as lords over them; theſe rich, with their dependents, ſtrive to outvie each other; whence came wars and mutual contentions, till they who got the better over their adverſaries, took ſtill greater authority into their hands: thence at firſt every city almoſt, and adjacent territory, had a king over it; which by conflicting with each other, at laſt brought ſeveral cities and territories under the power of one particular perſon, who thereby came to reign as ſole monarch over all within his dominions. CHAP. I.

XVII. For although there be ſome reaſon to think, that the leaders of ſeveral colonies had at firſt ſuperiority

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over all that went with them; yet there being evidence in few nations of any continued ſucceſſion of monarchs from the poſterity of Noah, and ſo great evidence of ſo many petty royalties almoſt in every city (as we read of ſuch multitudes of kings in the ſmall territory of Canaan, when Joſhua conquered it), this makes it at leaſt probable to me, that after the death of the firſt leader, by reaſon of their poverty and diſperſedneſs of habitations, they did not incorporate generally into any civil government under one head, but did riſe by degrees in the manner before ſet down; but yet ſo, that in the petty diviſions ſome prerogative might be given to him who derived his pedigree the neareſt from the firſt founder of that plantation; which in all probability is the meaning of Thucydides, who tells us, when the riches of Greece began to increaſe, and their power improved, tyrannies were erected in moſt cities, πρότερον δὲ ἦσαν ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς γέρασι πατρικαὶ βασιλεῖαι, *for before that time kingdoms with honours limited were hereditary*; for ſo the ſcholiaſt explains it, πατρικαὶ βασιλεῖαι ἀπὸ τῶν πατέρων παραλαμβανόμεναι κατὰ διαδοχὴν γένους. This then being the ſtate and caſe of moſt nations in the firſt ages after their plantation, there was no likelihood at all of any great improvement in knowledge among them; nay, ſo far from it, that for the firſt ages, wherein they conflicted with poverty and neceſſity, there was a neceſſary decay among them, of what knowledge had been conveyed to them: becauſe their neceſſities kept them in continual employment; and after they conquered them, they began to conquer each other: ſo that till ſuch time as they were ſettled in peace under eſtabliſhed commonwealths, there was no leiſure nor opportunity for any arts or ſciences to flouriſh, without which all certain hiſtories of their own former ſtate muſt vaniſh and dwindle into ſome fabulous ſtories. And ſo we find they did in moſt nations; which thence are able to give no other account of themſelves, but that they ſprung out

Thucyd. l. i. c. 13. Ed. Duker.

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out of the earth where they lived; from which opinion the Athenians used to wear of old their golden grashoppers, as Thucydides relates. What account can we then expect of ancient times from such nations, which were so defective in preserving their own originals? CHAP. I.

XVIII. Now this defectiveness of giving testimony of ancient times by these nations, will further appear by these two considerations: First, what ways there are for communicating knowledge to posterity. Secondly, how long it was ere these nations came to be masters of any way of certain communicating their conceptions to their successors. Three general ways there are, whereby knowledge may be propagated from one to another; by representative symbols, by speech, and by letters. The first of these was most common in those older times, for which purpose Clemens Alexandrinus produceth the testimony of an ancient grammarian, Dionysius Thrax, in his exposition of the symbol of the wheels: ἐσήμαινον γοῦν ἃ διὰ λέξεως μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ συμβόλων ἔνιοι τὰς πράξεις· *that some persons made a representation of their actions to others, not only by speech, but by symbols too.* Which any one, who is any ways conversant in the learning of those ancient times, will find to have been the chief way of propagating it (such as it was) from one to another: as is evident in the hieroglyphics of the Ægyptians, and the custom of symbols from thence derived among Grecian philosophers, especially the Pythagoreans. It was the solemn custom of the Ægyptians to wrap up all the little knowledge they had, under such mystical representations, which were unavoidably clogged with two inconveniences very unsuitable to the propagation of knowledge, which were obscurity and ambiguity. For it not only cost them a great deal of time to gather up such symbolical things which might represent their conceptions; but when they had pitched upon them, they were liable to a great variety of interpretations, as

Clem. Alexan. Strom. l. v. c. 8. Edit. Oxon.

BOOK I. is evident in all thoſe remainders of them, preſerved by the induſtry of ſome ancient writers. As in their κωμασιαὶ, or *golden images of their Gods*, they had engraved two dogs, an hawk, and an ibis. By the dogs ſome underſtood the two hemiſpheres, others the two tropics; by the hawk ſome underſtood the ſun, others the equinoctial; by the ibis, ſome the moon, others the zodiac, as is evident in Clemens, who reports it. This way then is a moſt unfit way to convey any ancient tradition; by being both obſcure, ambiguous, and unable to expreſs ſo much as to give any certain light to future ages of the paſſages of the precedent.

XIX. The other ways of conveying knowledge are either by ſpeech, or by letters. The firſt muſt be by ſome vocal cabala, delivered down from father to ſon; but words being of ſo periſhing a nature, and man's memory ſo weak and frail in retaining them, it is neceſſary for a certain communication of knowledge, that ſome way ſhould be found out more laſting than words, more firm than memory, more faithful than tradition: which could not otherwiſe be imagined, than that the author of his own conceptions ſhould himſelf leave them to the view of all poſterity; in order to which, ſome way muſt be contrived, whereby men's voices might be ſeen, and men's fingers ſpeak. But how to expreſs all kind of ſounds, with the ſeveral draughts of a pen, and to confine them within the compaſs of twenty-four letters, is deſervedly called by Galileo, *admirandarum omnium inventionum humanarum ſignaculum, the choiceſt of all human inventions.* And had we no other evidence of the great obſcurity of ancient hiſtory, the great difference as to the firſt inventor of letters, would be a ſufficient demonſtration of it. For almoſt every nation hath had a ſeveral author of them: the Jews derive them from Adam or Moſes; the Ægyptians attribute their invention to Thoyt, or Mercury; the Grecians to Cadmus; the Phœnicians to

to Taautus; the Latins to Saturn; others to the Æthiopians: and leſt the Pygmies ſhould be without their enemies, ſome think they were found out *à gruum volatu*, from the manner of the flying of cranes. Thus it hath happened with moſt nations; what was firſt among themſelves, they thought to be the firſt in the world. CHAP. I.

But by whomſoever they were firſt invented, we are certain they were but lately in uſe in that nation, which hath moſt vainly arrogated the moſt to itſelf in point of antiquity, and yet had the leaſt reaſon, I mean the Grecians. Thence the Ægyptian prieſt, Patenit, truly told Solon, *the Greeks were always children*, becauſe they had nothing of the antiquities of former ages. If we may believe Joſephus, they had no writings earlier than Homer; but herein he is conceived to have ſerved his cauſe too much, becauſe of the inſcription of Amphitryo at Thebes, in the temple of Apollo Iſmenius, in the Ionic letters, and two others of the ſame age to be ſeen in Herodotus; and becauſe of the writings of Lycus, Orpheus, Muſæus, Orœbantius Trœzenius, Thaletas, Meleſander, and others. This we are certain of, the Grecians had not the uſe of letters among them till the time of Cadmus the Phœnician's coming into Greece, whither he came to plant a colony of Phœnicians, whence aroſe the ſtory of his purſuit of Europa, as Conon in Photius tells us. XX. Procl. in. Tim. Plat. Joſeph. c. App. lib. i. c. 2. Ed. Oxon. Herodot. lib. v. c. 59, 60. Ed. Weſſ. V. Bochart. Geograph. Sacr. p. 2. l. i. c. 20. Conon apud Phot. Bibl. c. 37.

And it is very probable, which learned men have long ſince obſerved, that the name Cadmus comes from the Hebrew קדם *Kedem*, and may relate as an appellative either to his dignity, as Junius in his Academia conjectures, or more probably to his country, the Eaſt, which is frequently called *Kedem* in Scripture. Some have conjectured further, that his proper name was עוג *Og*; upon what reaſon I know not, unleſs from hence, that thence by a duplication of the word came the Greek Ὤγυγος, who ſeems to have been no other than Cadmus, as will appear by com-

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paring their ſtories together. Only one was the name his memory was preſerved by at Athens, where the Cadmeans inhabited, as appears by the Gephyræi, who Herodotus tells us were Phœnicians that came with Cadmus; and others fancy the Academia there was originally called Cadmea; and the name Cadmus was preſerved chiefly among the Bœotians, in memory of the country whence he came: it being likely to be impoſed by them upon his firſt landing in the country; as many learned perſons conceive, the name of an Hebrew was given to Abraham by the Canaanites, upon his paſſing over the river Euphrates. On this account then it ſtands to reaſon, that the name which was given him as a ſtranger, ſhould be longeſt preſerved in the place where it was firſt impoſed. Or if we take קדם in the other ſenſe, as it imports antiquity; ſo there is ſtill a higher probability of the affinity of the names of Cadmus and Ogyges; for it is certain, that the Greeks had no higher name for a matter of antiquity, than to call it Ὠγύγιον, as the ſcholiaſt on Heſiod, Heſychius, Suidas, Euſtathius on Dionyſius, and many others obſerve. And which yet advanceth the probability higher, Luctatius or Lactantius, the ſcholiaſt on Statius, tells us, the other Greeks had this from the Thebans; for, ſaith he, *Thebani res antiquas Ogygias nominabant.* But that which puts it almoſt beyond mere probability, is, that Varro, Feſtus, Pauſanias, Apollonius, Æſchylus, and others make Ogyges the founder of the Bœotian Thebes, which were thence called Ogygiæ; and Strabo and Stephanus further ſay, that the whole country of Bœotia was called Ogygia: now all that mention the ſtory of Cadmus, attribute to him the founding of the Bœotian Thebes. And withal it is obſervable, that in the Vatican appendix of the Greek Proverbs, we read Cadmus called Ogyges; Ὠγύγια κακὰ, ἐπὶ τῶν ὀχληρῶν, ἐπεὶ συνέζη Κάδμον τὸν Ὠγύγην διὰ τὰς θυγατέρας κακοῖς περιπεσεῖν. Meurſius indeed would have it corrected, Κάδμον τὸν Ὠγύγε, as it

Hiſt. l. v.

Lactantius in Statii Theb. l. i.

Vatic. App. Cen. 4. Prov. 52. Meurſius de Regno Att. Lib. viii. c. 5.

it is read in Suidas; but by the favour of ſo learned a man, it ſeems more probable that Suidas ſhould be corrected by that; he bringing no other evidence of any ſuch perſon as Cadmus a ſon of Ogyges, but only that reading in Suidas; whereas we have diſcovered many probable grounds to make them both the ſame. That which I would now infer from hence is, the utter impoſſibility of the Greeks giving us any certain account of ancient times, when a thing ſo modern in compariſon as Cadmus's coming into Greece, is thought by them a matter of ſo great antiquity, that when they would deſcribe a thing very ancient, they deſcribed it by the name of Ogyges, who was the ſame with Cadmus. Now Cadmus's coming into Greece is generally, by hiſtorians, placed about the time of Joſhua, whence ſome (I will not ſay how happily) have conjectured, that Cadmus and his company were ſome of the Canaanites who fled from Joſhua, as others are ſuppoſed to have done into Africa, if Procopius's pillar hath ſtrength enough to bear ſuch a conjecture. But there is too great a confuſion about the time of Cadmus's arrival in Greece, to affirm any thing with any great certainty about it.

Yet thoſe who diſagree from that former computation, place it yet lower. Voſſius makes Agenor, Cadmus's father, contemporary with the latter end of Moſes, or the beginning of Joſhua; and ſo Cadmus's time muſt fall ſomewhat after. Jac. Cappellus placeth Cadmus in the third year of Othoniel. The author of the Greek Chronicle, in the Marmora Arundelliana, makes his coming to Greece to be in the time of Helen, the ſon of Deucalion; which Cappellus fixeth on the 73d of Moſes, A. M. 2995. But Mr. Selden conceives it ſomewhat lower: and ſo it muſt be, if we follow Clemens Alexandrinus, who places it in the time of Lynceus king of the Argives, which he ſaith was ἑνδεκάτη ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ Μωσέως γενεᾷ, *in the eleventh generation after Moſes*, which will fall about the time of Samuel: but though it ſhould be ſo

Voſſius de Idol. l. i. c. 13.

Strom. l. i. c. 17. Ed. Oxon.

BOOK I.

ſo late, it would be no wonder it ſhould be reckoned a matter of ſo great antiquity among the Grecians; for the oldeſt records they have of any king at Athens, begin at the time of Moſes, whoſe contemporary Cecrops is generally thought to be; for at Cecrops's time it is the Marble Chronicle begins. Now that the Grecians did receive their very letters from the Phœnicians by Cadmus, is commonly acknowledged by the moſt learned of the Greeks themſelves, as appears by the ingenuous confeſſion of Herodotus, Philoſtratus, Critias in Athenæus, Zenodotus in Laertius, Timon Phliaſius in Sextus Empiricus, and many others: ſo that it were to no purpoſe to offer to prove that, which they who arrogate ſo much to themſelves, do ſo freely acknowledge. Which yet hath been done to very good purpoſe by Joſeph Scaliger and Bochartus, and many others, from the form of the letters, the order and the names of them. It ſeems probable that at firſt they might uſe the form of the Phœnician letters, in which Herodotus tells us the three old inſcriptions were extant; and Diodorus tells us, that the braſs pot which Cadmus offered to Minerva Lindia, had an inſcription on it in the Phœnician letters: but afterwards the form of the letters came by degrees to be changed, when for their greater expedition in writing they left the old way of writing towards the left hand, for the more natural and expedite way of writing towards the right, by which they exchanged the ſites of the ſtrokes in ſeveral letters, as it is obſerved by the forecited learned authors.

Scalig. Not. in Euſeb. Chron. n. 1617. Bochart. Geogr. p. 2. l. i. cap. 20.

Not that the old Ionic letters were nearer the Phœnician, and diſtinct from the modern, as Joſ. Scaliger in his learned diſcourſe on the original of the Greek letters conceives; for the Ionic letters were nothing elſe but the full alphabet of twenty-four, with the additions of Palamedes, and Simonides Ceus; as Pliny tells us, that all the Greeks conſented in the uſe of the Ionic letters: but the old Attic letters

Scalig. ibid.

Plinii Hiſt. l. vii. cap. 57. Ed. Harduin.

letters came nearer the Phœnician, becauſe the Athenians, long after the alphabet was increaſed to twenty-four, continued ſtill in the uſe of the old ſixteen, which were brought in by Cadmus; which muſt needs much alter the way of writing: for in the old letters, they writ THEOΣ for Θεὸς, which made Pliny, with a great deal of learning and truth, ſay, that the old Greek letters were the ſame with the Roman. Thence the Greeks called their ancient letters Ἀτλικὰ γράμματα, as appears by Harpocration and Heſychius; not that they were ſo much diſtinct from others, but becauſe they did not admit of the addition of the other eight letters. CHAP. I. V. Mauſacum in Harpocr. Salmaſ. in Conſecr. Templ. p. 30. XXI.

We ſee then the very letters of the Greeks were no older than Cadmus; and for any conſiderable learning among them, it was not near ſo old. Some aſſert indeed, that hiſtory began from the time of Cadmus; but it is by a miſtake of him for a younger Cadmus, which was Cadmus Mileſius, whom Pliny makes to be the firſt writer in proſe; but that he after attributes to Pherecydes Syrius, and hiſtory to Cadmus Mileſius: and therefore I think it far more probable, that it was ſome writing of this latter Cadmus, which was tranſcribed and epitomized by Bion Proconeſius, although Clemens Alexandrinus ſeems to attribute it to the elder. We ſee how unable then the Grecians were to give an account of older times, that were guilty of ſo much infancy and nonage, as to begin to learn their letters almoſt in the noon-tide of the world, and yet long after this, to the time of the firſt Olympiad, all their relations are accounted fabulous. A fair account then we are like to have from them of the firſt antiquities of the world, who could not ſpeak plain truth, till the world was above three thouſand years old; for ſo was it when the Olympiads began. Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. v. c. 31. l. vii. c. 57. Clem. Strom. l. vi. c. 2. Ed. Oxon.

So true is the obſervation of Juſtin Martyr, ἀδὲν Ἕλλησι πρὸ τῶν Ὀλυμπιάδων ἀκριβὲς ἱστόρηται; *the Greeks had* Juſtin. Martyr. Cohort. ad Græcos, c. 12. Ed. Oxon.

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BOOK I. *had no exact hiſtory of themſelves before the Olympiads*; but of that more afterwards.

This is now the firſt defect which doth infringe the credibility of theſe hiſtories, which is *the want of timely and early records* to digeſt their own hiſtory in.

CHAP.

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CHAP. II.

Of the Phœnician and Egyptian Hiſtory.

I. *The particular Defect in the Hiſtory of the moſt learned Heathen Nations.* II. *Firſt the* Phœnicians. *Of* Sanchoniathon; *his Antiquity and Fidelity.* III. *Of* Jerom-baal, Baal-Berith. IV. *The Antiquity of* Tyre. Scaliger *vindicated againſt* Bochartus. V. Abibalus. VI. *The Vanity of* Phœnician *Theology.* VII. *The Imitation of it by the* Gnoſtics. VIII. *Of the* Egyptian *Hiſtory.* IX. *The Antiquity and Authority of* Hermes Triſmegiſtus. X. *Of his Inſcriptions on Pillars, tranſcribed by* Manetho. XI. *His Fabulouſneſs thence diſcovered.* Terra Seriadica. XII. *Of* Seth's *Pillars in* Joſephus; *and an Account whence they were taken.*

CHAP. II. I.

HAVING already ſhewed a general defect in the ancient Heathen hiſtories, as to an account of ancient times, we now come to a cloſer and more particular conſideration of the hiſtories of thoſe ſeveral nations which have borne the greateſt name in the world for learning and antiquity. There are four nations chiefly, which have pretended the moſt to antiquity in the learned world, and whoſe hiſtorians have been thought to deliver any thing contrary to holy writ in their account of ancient times, whom on that account we are obliged more particularly to conſider; and thoſe are the Phœnicians, Chaldæans, Egyptians, and Grecians: we ſhall therefore ſee what evidence of credibility there can be in any of theſe, as to the matter of antiquity of their records, or their hiſtories taken from them. And, the credibility of an hiſtorian depending much upon the certainty and authority of the records he makes uſe of, we ſhall both conſider of what value and antiquity the

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BOOK I. the pretended records are; and particularly look into the age of the ſeveral hiſtorians. As to the Grecians, we have ſeen already an utter impoſſibility of having any ancient records among them, becauſe they wanted the means of preſerving them, having ſo lately borrowed their letters from other nations. Unleſs as to their account of times they had been as careful, as the old Romans were, to number their years by the ſeveral *clavi* or *nails*, which they fixed on the temple doors, which yet they were not in any capacity to do, not growing up in an entire body, as the Roman empire did, but lying ſo much ſcattered and divided into ſo many petty republics, that they minded very little of concernment to the whole nation. The other three nations have, deſervedly, a name of far greater antiquity than any the Grecians could ever pretend to; who yet were unmeaſurably guilty of an impotent affectation of antiquity, and arrogating to themſelves, as growing on their own ground, what was with a great deal of pains and induſtry gathered but as the gleanings from the fuller harveſt of thoſe nations they reſorted to; which is not only true as to the greateſt part of their learning, but as to the account likewiſe they give of ancient times; the chief and moſt ancient hiſtories among them being only a corruption of the hiſtory of the elder nations, eſpecially Phœnicia and Egypt: for of theſe two Philo Byblius, the tranſlator of the ancient Phœnician hiſtorian, Sanchoniathon, ſaith, *they were* παλαιότατοι τῶν Βαρβάρων, παρ' ὧν καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ παρέλαβον ἄνθρωποι, *the moſt ancient of all the barbarians, from whom the others derived their theology*; which he there particularly inſtanceth in.

Philo Bybl. apud Euſeb. Præp. Evang. l. i. c. 9. p. 32. Ed. Viger.

II. We begin therefore with the Phœnician hiſtory, whoſe moſt ancient and famous hiſtorian is Sanchoniathon, ſo much admired and made uſe of by the ſhrewdeſt antagoniſt ever Chriſtianity met with, the philoſopher Porphyrius. But therein was ſeen the wonderful providence of God, that out of this *eater* came

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came forth *meat*, and out of the *lion*, *honey*; that the most considerable testimonies by him produced against our religion, were of the greatest strength to refute his own. For he being of too great learning to be satisfied with the vain pretences of the Grecians, he made it his business to search after the most ancient records, to find out somewhat in them to confront with the antiquity of the Scriptures; but upon his search could find none of greater veneration than the Phœnician history, nor any author contending for age with this Sanchoniathon: yet when he had made the most of his testimony, he was fain to yield him younger than Moses, though he supposeth him older than the Trojan wars. And yet herein was he guilty of a most gross ἀντιχρονία, not much exceeding the Grecians in his skill in chronology, when he makes Semiramis co-existent with the siege of Troy; as is evident in his testimony produced at large by Eusebius, out of his first book *against the Christians*; nay, he goes to prove the truth of Sanchoniathon's history, by the agreement of it with that of Moses concerning the Jews, both as to their names and places, ἱστορεῖ δὲ τὰ περὶ Ἰουδαίων ἀληθέστατα, ὅτι καὶ τοῖς τόποις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν αὐτῶν τὰ συμφωνότατα; whereby he doth evidently assert the greater truth and antiquity of Moses's history, when he proves the truth of Sanchoniathon's from his consonancy with that.

CHAP. II.

Euseb. Præp. Ev. l. x. c. 9. p. 483.

III. Two things more Porphyry insists on to manifest his credibility. The one, I suppose, relates to what he reports concerning the Jews; the other, concerning the Phœnicians themselves. For the first, that he made use of the records of Jerom-baal, the priest of the God Ieuo, or rather Iao; for the other, that he used all the records of the several cities, and the sacred inscriptions in the temples. Who that Jerom-baal was, is much discussed among learned men; the finding out of which hath been thought to be the most certain way to determine the age of Sanchoniathon. The learned Bochartus conceives him to be Gideon,

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BOOK I. Gideon, who in Scripture is called Jerub-baal, which is of the ſame ſenſe in the Phœnician language, only, after their cuſtom, changing one *b* into *m*, as in Ambubajæ, Sambuca, &c. But admitting the conjecture of this learned perſon concerning Jerub-baal, yet I ſee no neceſſity of making Sanchoniathon and him contemporary; for I no where find any thing mentioned in Porphyry implying that, but only that he made uſe of the records of Jerub-baal; which he might very probably do at a conſiderable diſtance of time from him. Whether by thoſe ὑπομνήματα, we mean the annals written by him, or the records concerning his actions; either of which might have given Sanchoniathon conſiderable light in the hiſtory either of the Iſraelites or Phœnicians. And it is ſo much the more probable, becauſe preſently after the death of Gideon, the Iſraelites worſhipped Baal-berith; by which moſt probably is meant the idol of Berith, or Berytus, the place where Sanchoniathon lived; by which means the Berytians might come eaſily acquainted with all the remarkable paſſages of Jerub-baal.

Bochart. Geogr. Sac. p. 2. l. ii. c. 17.

Judges viii. 33.

IV. But I cannot conceive how Sanchoniathon could be contemporary with Gideon (which yet if he were, he falls 182 years ſhort of Moſes), eſpecially becauſe the building of Tyre, which that author mentions as an ancient thing (as hath been obſerved by Scaliger), is by our beſt chronologers placed about the time of Gideon, and about 65 years before the deſtruction of Troy. I know Bochartus, to avoid this argument, hath brought ſome evidence of ſeveral places called Tyrus, in Phœnicia, from Scylax's Periplus; but none that there was any more than one Tyrus of any great repute for antiquity. Now this Tyrus Joſephus makes but 240 years older than Solomon's Temple; and Juſtin but one year older than the deſtruction of Troy. Neither can any account be given why Sidon ſhould be ſo much celebrated by ancient poets, as Strabo tells us, when Tyre is not ſo much

Scalig. Not. in Frag. Græc. p. 40.

Joſeph. Ant. l. viii. c. 3.

Strabo, l. xvi. p. 520. Ed. Caſaub.

much as mentioned by Homer; if the famous Tyre were of ſo great antiquity and repute as is pretended. It cannot be denied but that there is mention in Scripture of a Tyre older than this we ſpeak of, Joſhua xix. 29. which ſome think to be that which was called Palætyrus, which Strabo makes to be 20 furlongs diſtant from the great Tyre; but Pliny includes Palætyrus within the circumference of Tyre, and ſo makes the whole circuit of the city to be 19 miles. It is not to me ſo certain to what place the name of Palætyrus refers; whether to any Tyrus before the firſt building of the great Tyre, or to the ruins of the great Tyre after its deſtruction by Nebuchadnezzar, compared with the new Tyre, which was built more inward to the ſea, and was after beſieged by Alexander the Great. It may ſeem probable that Palætyrus may relate to the ruins of the great Tyre, in that it was after included in its circuit, and chiefly becauſe of the prediction in Ezekiel, xxvi. 4. *Thou ſhalt be built no more*; for the Tyre erected after was built not on the continent, but almoſt in the ſea. If ſo, then Palætyrus, or the old famous Tyrus, might ſtand upon a rock upon the brink of the continent: and ſo the great argument of Bochartus is eaſily anſwered, which is, *that after it is mentioned in Sanchoniathon's hiſtory, that Hypſouranius dwelt in Tyre upon the falling out between him and his brother Uſous, Uſous firſt adventured* εἰς θάλασσαν ἐμβῆναι, *to go to ſea*; which, ſaith he, *evidently manifeſts that the Tyre mentioned by Sanchoniathon was not the famous inſular Tyrus, but ſome other Tyre.* This argument, I ſay, is now eaſily anſwered, if the famous Tyre, before its deſtruction by Nebuchadnezzar, did ſtand upon the continent; for then it might be the old famous Tyre ſtill, notwithſtanding what Sanchoniathon ſpeaks of the firſt venturing to ſea after Tyre was built. So then I conceive theſe ſeveral ages agreeable to the ſame Tyre: the firſt was when it was a high ſtrong rock on the ſea-ſide, without many

Plin. Hiſt. Nat. l. v. c. 17.

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BOOK I.

inhabitants; so I suppose it was, when mentioned by Joshua as the bound of the tribe of Asher. The second age was, when it was built a great city by the Sidonians upon the former place, and grew very populous and famous, which lasted till Nebuchadnezzar's time; after this, though it were never built upon the continent again, yet a little farther into the sea, a new and goodly city was erected, which was called New Tyre, and the remains on the continent side Palætyrus. Thus far, then, we have made good Scaliger's opinion against Bochartus, that the famous Sanchoniathon is not so old as he is pretended to be.

V.

Which will be further manifest, if that Abibalus, to whom Sanchoniathon is supposed to dedicate his history, were the father to Hiram, contemporary with Solomon, as Jos. Scaliger supposeth, who was 154 years after the destruction of Troy. In the Tyrian dynasties, produced by Scaliger out of the Phœnician annals, this Abibalus is the first who occurs, and is contemporary with David: Sanchoniathon then is of no great antiquity, if this were the time he lived in. But Bochartus well observes, that it is not spoken of Abibalus king of Tyre, but of Abibalus king of Berytus, whom we may allow to be somewhat nearer the time of Moses than the other Abibalus, as the Phœnician annals make it appear, as Porphyry tells us: but yet we find his antiquity is not so great as to be able to contest with Moses, as Porphyry himself confesseth; although we may freely acknowledge him to be far older than any of the Greek historians; which is all Vossius contends for, and sufficiently proves: but we are far from yielding him contemporary with Semiramis, as Porphyry would have him, and yet makes him junior to Moses, and to live about the time of the Trojan war; which is to reconcile the distance of near 800 years: such miserable confusion was there in the best learned Heathens, in their computation of ancient times.

Scal. Not. in Euseb. Chr. p. 12. Scal. Can. Isag. l. ii.

Voss. de Hist. Græc. l. i. c. 1.

Having

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Having thus cleared the antiquity of Sanchoniathon and the Phœnician history, we are next to consider the fidelity of it. This Sanchoniathon is highly commended for, both by Porphyry, and his translator into Greek, Philo Byblius, who lived in Adrian's time; and Theodoret thinks his name, in the Phœnician language, signifies φιλαλήθης, which Bochartus endeavours to fetch from thence, and conceives the name to be given him when he set himself to write his history; and he wisheth, and so do we, that he had been then *vir sui nominis*, and made it appear by his writing, that he had been a *lover of truth*. Philo saith he was ἀνὴρ πολυμαθὴς καὶ πολυπράγμων, *a very learned and inquisitive man*; but either he was not so diligent to enquire after, or not so happy to light on any certain records; or if he did, he was not overmuch a lover of truth in delivering them to the world. How faithful he was in transcribing his history from his records, we cannot be sufficient judges of, unless we had those books of Taautus, and the sacred inscriptions, and the records of cities which he pretends to take his history from, to compare them together. But by what remains of his history, which is only the first book concerning the Phœnician theology, extant in Eusebius, we have little reason to believe his history of the world and oldest times, without further proof than he gives of it; there being so much obscurity and confusion in it, when he makes a Chaos to be the first beginning of all things, and the Gods to come after; makes Αὐτόχθων γηΐνῳ to be the son of Chrysor or Vulcan, and again the same γηΐνῳ, *the man born of earth*, to be several generations after Αἰὼν and Πρωτόγονῳ, who were the first mortal men; and yet from the two brethren, Τεχνίτης and Αὐτόχθων, came two Gods, whereof one was called Ἀγρὸς, and the other Ἀγρότης; and this latter was worshipped with as much veneration as any of their Gods.

Yet from theſe things, as fooliſh and ridiculous as they are, it is very probable the Gnoſtics, and the ſeveral ſubdiviſions of them, might take the riſe of their ſeveral Æones and συζυγίαι: for here we find Αἰὼν and Πρωτόγονος made two of the number of the Gods; but the reſt of the names they, according to their ſeveral ſects, took a liberty of altering, according to their ſeveral fancies. This is far more probable to me, than that either Heſiod's Θεογονία ſhould be the ground of them, or the opinion of a late German divine, who conceives that Philo Byblius did, in imitation of the Gnoſtics, form this holy ſtory of the Phœnician theology. For although I am far from believing what Kircher ſomewhere tells us, that he had once got a ſight of Sanchoniathon's original hiſtory (it being not the firſt thing that learned man hath been deceived in), yet I ſee no ground of ſo much peeviſhneſs, as, becauſe this hiſtory pretends to ſo much antiquity, we ſhould therefore preſently condemn it as a figment of the tranſlator of it: for had it been ſo, the antagoniſts of Porphyry, Methodius, Apollinaris, but eſpecially Euſebius, ſo well verſed in antiquities, would have found out ſo great a cheat: although I muſt confeſs they were oft-times deceived with *piæ fraudes*; but then it was when they made for the Chriſtians, and not againſt them, as this did. But beſides a fabulous confuſion of things together, we have ſome things delivered concerning their Gods, which are both contrary to all natural notions of a Deity, and to thoſe very common principles of humanity, which all acknowledge. As when Κρόνος or Saturn, ſuſpecting his ſon Sadidus, deſtroyed him with his own hands, and warred againſt his father Uranus; and after deſtroyed him likewiſe, and buried his brother Atlas alive in the earth; which being taken, as Philo Byblius contends they ought to be, in the literal ſenſe, are ſuch incongruities to all notions of a divine nature, that it is the greateſt wonder there

Joh. Urſinus Exerc. 3. ſect. 1.

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there ſhould be any that ſhould believe there was any God, and believe theſe were Gods together. CHAP. II.

But although there be ſo many groſs fables and inconſiſtencies in this Phœnician theology, that are ſo far from meriting belief in themſelves, that it were a ſufficient forfeiture of reaſon to ſay they were credible; yet when we have a greater light in our hands of divine revelation, we may in this dungeon find out many excellent remainders of the ancient tradition, though miſerably corrupted; as, concerning the creation, the original of idolatry, the invention of arts, the foundation of cities, the ſtory of Abraham; of which in their due place. That which of all ſeems the cleareſt in this theology, is the open owning the original of idolatry to have been from the conſecration of ſome eminent perſons after their death, who had found out ſome uſeful things for the world while they were living, which the ſubtler Greeks would not admit of, viz. that the perſons they worſhipped were once men; which made them turn all into allegories and myſtical ſenſes, to blind that idolatry they were guilty of the better among the ignorant: which makes Philo Byblius ſo very angry with the Neoteric Grecians, as he calls them, ὡς ἂν βεβιασμένως καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῶς τὰς περὶ θεῶν μύθους ἐπ' ἀλληγορίας καὶ φυσικὰς διηγήσεις τε καὶ θεωρίας ἀνάγουσι: *That with a great deal of force and ſtraining they turned all the ſtories of the Gods into allegories and phyſical diſcourſes.* Which is all the ingenuity that I know is to be found in this Phœnician theology, that therein we find a free acknowledgment of the beginning of the Heathen idolatry; and therefore Sanchoniathon was as far from advancing Porphyry's religion, as he was, in the leaſt, from overthrowing the credibility of Chriſtianity.

Philo Bybl. ap. Euſeb. Præp. l. i. c. 9. p. 32.

The next we come to, then, are the Egyptians; a people ſo unreaſonably given to fables, that the wiſeſt action they did was to *conceal* their religion, and the beſt office their Gods had, was to *hold their fingers in* VIII.

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BOOK I.

their mouths, to command ſilence to all that came to worſhip them. But we deſign not here any ſet diſcourſe concerning the vanity of the Egyptian theology, which yet was ſo monſtrouſly ridiculous, that even thoſe who were over-run with the height of idolatry themſelves, did make it the object of their ſcorn and laughter. And certainly had we no other demonſtration of the greatneſs of man's apoſtaſy and degeneracy, the Egyptian theology would be an irrefragable evidence of it: for who could but imagine a ſtrange lowneſs of ſpirit in thoſe, who could fall down and worſhip the baſeſt and moſt contemptible of creatures? Their temples were the beſt hieroglyphics of themſelves; fair and goodly ſtructures without, but within ſome deformed creatures enſhrined for veneration. But though the Egyptians had loſt their credit ſo much as to matters of religion, yet it may be ſuppoſed, that they, who were ſo famed for wiſdom and antiquity, ſhould be able to give a full and exact account of themſelves through all the ages of the world. And this they are ſo far from being defective in, that, if you will believe them, they will give you an account of themſelves many thouſands of years before ever the world was made; but the peculiar vanity of their chronology will be handled afterwards: that we now enquire into, is, what certain records they had of their own antiquity, which might call for aſſent from any unprejudiced mind; whether there be any thing really anſwering that loud and unparalleled cry of antiquity among the Egyptians, whereby they will make all other nations, in compariſon of them, to be but of yeſterday, and to know nothing. We queſtion not now their pretence to wiſdom and learning; but are the more in hopes to meet with ſome certain way of ſatisfaction concerning ancient times, where learning is ſuppoſed to have flouriſhed ſo much, even when Greece itſelf was accounted barbarous.

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The great baſis of all the Egyptian hiſtory depends on the credit of their ancient Hermes, whom, out of their veneration, they called Triſmegiſtus; for to him they aſcribe the firſt invention of their learning, and all excellent arts; from him they derive their hiſtory; their famous hiſtorian, Manetho, profeſſing to tranſcribe his Dynaſties from the pillars of Hermes. We ſhall, therefore, firſt ſee of what credit and antiquity Hermes himſelf was, and of what account particularly thoſe pillars were, which uphold all the fabric of Manetho's Dynaſties. For Hermes himſelf, the ſtory concerning him is ſo various and uncertain, that ſome have from thence queſtioned whether ever there were ſuch a perſon or no, becauſe of the ſtrangely different account that is given of him. Cotta, in Tully, in order to the eſtabliſhing his academical doctrine of withholding aſſent, mentions no fewer than five Mercuries; of which, two he makes Egyptian; one of them the Hermes we now ſpeak of, whom the Egyptians call Thoyth, and was the author both of their laws and letters. The Egyptians, as appears by Diodorus, make him to be a ſacred ſcribe to Oſiris, and to have inſtructed Iſis; and when Oſiris went upon any warlike expedition, he committed the management of affairs to him, for his great wiſdom. The Phœnicians preſerve his memory among them too; for Philo Byblius ſaith, that Sanchoniathon deſcribed his theology from the books of Taautus, whom the Egyptians call Thoyth, who was the firſt inventor of letters, and was a counſellor to Saturn, whoſe advice he much relied on. What, now, muſt we pitch upon in ſo great uncertainties? How come the Phœnician and Egyptian theology to come both from the ſame perſon, which are conceived ſo much to differ from each other? If we make the ſtories of Oſiris and Iſis to be fabulous, and merely allegorical, as Plutarch doth, then Mercury himſelf muſt become an allegory, and the father of letters muſt be an hieroglyphic. If we admit the

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 56.

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Egyptian narrations to be real, and ſeek to reduce them to truth, and thereby make Oſiris to be Mitſraim, the ſon of Cham, who firſt ruled in Egypt, all that we can then affirm of Hermes, is, that he might be ſome uſeful perſon, who had a great influence both upon the king and ſtate, and did firſt ſettle the nation in a politic way of government, whoſe memory, on that account, the Egyptians might preſerve with the greateſt veneration; and when they were once fallen into that idolatry of conſecrating the memories of the firſt contributors to the good of mankind, they thought they had the greateſt reaſon to adore his memory, and ſo by degrees attributed the invention of all uſeful things to him. For ſo it is apparent they did, when Jamblichus tells us the Egyptians attributed all their books to Mercury, as the father of them: becauſe he was reputed the father of wit and learning, they made all the offſprings of their brains to bear their father's name: and this hath been the great reaſon the world hath been ſo long time impoſed upon with varieties of books, going under the name of Hermes Triſmegiſtus. For he was not the firſt of his kind, who, in the early days of the Chriſtian world, obtruded upon the world that *Cento*, or confuſed mixture of the Chriſtian, Platonic, and Egyptian doctrines, which is extant ſtill under the name of Hermes Triſmegiſtus; whoſe vanity and falſehood hath been ſufficiently detected by learned men. There were long before his time extant ſeveral Mercurial books, as they were called, which none of the wiſer Heathens did ever look on as any other than fables and impoſtures, as appears by Porphyry's letter to Anebo, the Egyptian prieſt, and Jamblichus's anſwer to it, in his book of the Egyptian myſteries.

Jamblic. de Myſt. c. 1. ſect. 1. Edit. Oxon.

X. We have, then, no certainty at all, notwithſtanding the great fame of Hermes, of any certain records of ancient times, unleſs they be contained in thoſe ſacred inſcriptions from whence Manetho took his hiſtory.

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hiſtory. It muſt be acknowledged, that the moſt ancient way of preſerving any monuments of learning in thoſe older times, was by theſe inſcriptions on pillars, eſpecially among the Egyptians, as is evident from the ſeveral teſtimonies of Galen, Proclus, Jamblichus, and the author of the book called *Sapientia ſecundum Egyptios*, adjoined to Ariſtotle; who all concur in this, that whatever laudable invention they had among them, it was inſcribed on ſome pillars, and thoſe preſerved in their temples, which were inſtead of libraries to them. Manetho, therefore, to make his ſtory the more probable, pretends to take all his relations from theſe ſacred inſcriptions; and, as Euſebius tells us, tranſlated the whole Egyptian hiſtory into Greek, beginning from their Gods, and continuing his hiſtory down near the time of Darius Codomannus, whom Alexander conquered: for in Euſebius's Chronica mention is made of Manetho's hiſtory, ending the 16th year of Artaxerxes Ochus, which, ſaith Voſſius, was in the ſecond year of the 107th Olympiad. This Manetho Sebennyta was high prieſt of Heliopolis in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, at whoſe requeſt he writ his hiſtory, which he digeſted into three tomes: the firſt containing the eleven dynaſties of the Gods and Heroes; the ſecond, eight dynaſties; the third, twelve; all containing, according to his fabulous computation, the ſum of 53,535 years. Theſe dynaſties are yet preſerved, being firſt epitomized by Julius Africanus; from him tranſcribed by Euſebius in his Chronica; from Euſebius by Georgius Syncellus; out of whom they are produced by Joſ. Scaliger; and may be ſeen both in his Euſebius and his Canones Iſagogici.

Gal. l. i. c. Jul. c. 1. Procl. in Tim. p. 31. Jamb. de Myſt. c. 2. ſect. 1. Sap. ſec. Egypt. c. 1. ſect. 1.

Voſſius de Hiſt. Græc. l. i. c. 14.

Euſeb. Chron. p. 6. Ed. Scal.

XI. Now Manetho, as appears by Euſebius, voucheth this as the main teſtimony of his credibility, that he took his hiſtory, ἐκ τῶν ἐν τῇ Σηριαδικῇ γῇ κειμένων στηλῶν, ἱερᾷ διαλέκτῳ καὶ ἱερογραφικοῖς γράμμασι κεχαραχτηρισμένων ὑπὸ Θωὺθ τοῦ πρώτου Ἑρμοῦ, καὶ ἑρμηνευθεισῶν μετὰ τὸν

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τὸν Κατάκλυσμον ἐκ τῆς ἱερᾶς διαλέκτου εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν γράμμασιν ἱερογλυφικοῖς, καὶ ἀποτεθεισῶν ἐν βίβλοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀγαθοδαίμονος τοῦ δευτέρου Ἑρμοῦ, πατρὸς τοῦ Τάτ, ἐν τοῖς ἀδύτοις τῶν ἱερῶν Αἰγυπτίων: *from some pillars in the land of Seriad, in which they were inscribed in the sacred dialect by the first Mercury Thoyth, and after the flood were translated out of the sacred dialect into the Greek tongue in hieroglyphic characters; and are laid up in books, among the vestries of the Egyptian temples, by Agathodæmon, the second Mercury, the father of Tat.* Certainly this fabulous author could not in fewer words have more fully manifested his own impostures, nor blasted his own credit, more than he hath done in these; which it is a wonder so many learned men have taken so little notice of, which have found frequent occasion to speak of Manetho and his Dynasties. This I shall make appear by some great improbabilities, and other plain impossibilities, which (1.) are couched in them. The improbabilities are, first, such pillars being in such a place as Seriad, and that place no more spoken of either by himself or by any other Egyptians, nor any use made of these inscriptions by any other but himself. As to this Terra Seriadica, where it should be, the very learned and inquisitive Joseph Scaliger plainly gives out, and ingenuously professeth his ignorance; for in his notes on the Fragments of Manetho, in Eusebius, when he comes to that ἐν τῇ γῇ Σηριαδικῇ, he only saith, *Quæ nobis ignota quærant studiosi.* But Isaac Vossius, in his late discourses, *de Ætate Mundi*, cries Εὕρηκα, and confidently persuades himself that it is the same with Seirah, mentioned Judges iii. 16. Indeed were there nothing else to be considered but affinity of names, it might well be the same: but that פסילים, which we render the *stone-quarries*, should signify the pillars of Mercury, is somewhat hard to conceive. The LXX. render it, as himself observes, τὰ γλυπτὰ, by which they understand *graven images*: so the word is used 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. Deut. vii. 5. Isai. x. 19.

Scalig. Not. in Gr. Euseb. p. 408. Is. Voss. de æt. mund. c. 10.

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The vulgar Latin renders it *ad locum idolorum*; which were the certain interpretation, if Chytræus's conjecture were true, that Eglon had lately ſet up idols there: but if it be meant of pillars, I cannot but approve of Junius's interpretation, which I conceive bids faireſt to be the genuine ſenſe of the place, viz. that theſe ſtones here were the twelve ſtones pitched by Joſhua, in Gilgal, after the Iſraelites paſſed over Jordan; and theſe ſtones are ſaid to be by Gilgal, Judges iii. 19. So that, notwithſtanding this handſome conjecture, we are as far to ſeek for the pillars of Mercury as ever we were: and may be ſo to the world's end. Secondly, the ſtanding of theſe pillars during the flood, which muſt be ſuppoſed certainly to have ſome ſingular virtue in them to reſiſt ſuch a torrent of waters, which overthrew the ſtrongeſt built houſes, and moſt compacted cities. The plain impoſſibilities are, firſt, that Manetho ſhould tranſcribe his Dynaſties from the beginning of the hiſtory of Egypt, to almoſt the time of Alexander, out of ſacred inſcriptions of Thoyth, who lived in the beginning of the very firſt Dynaſty, according to his own computation. Sure this Thoyth was an excellent prophet, to write an hiſtory for above 50,000 years to come, as Manetho reckons it. Secondly, it is as well ſtill, that this hiſtory, after the flood, ſhould be tranſlated into hieroglyphic characters. What kind of tranſlation is that? We had thought hieroglyphics had been repreſentations of things, and not of ſounds and letters, or words. How could this hiſtory have at firſt been written in any tongue, when it was in hieroglyphics? Do hieroglyphics ſpeak in ſeveral languages; and are they capable of changing their tongues? But, thirdly, it is as good ſtill, that the ſecond Mercury, or Agathodæmon, did tranſlate this hiſtory ſo ſoon after the flood into Greek. Was the Greek tongue ſo much in requeſt ſo ſoon after the flood, that the Egyptian hiſtory, for the ſake of the Greeks, muſt be tranſlated into their language? Nay,

Joſh. iv. 19, 20, 21.

(2.)

(1.)

(2.)

(3.)

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Herod. l. ii. c. 49. Diod. l. i. c. 67. Ed. Weſſ.

Nay, is it not evident from Herodotus and Diodorus, that the Grecians were not permitted ſo much as any commerce with the Egyptians till the time of Pſammetichus; which fell out in the 26th dynaſty of Manetho, and about a century after the beginning of the Olympiads. We ſee, then, how credible an author Manetho is, and what truth there is like to be in the account of ancient times given by the Egyptian hiſtorians, when the chief of them ſo lamentably and ominouſly ſtumbles in his very entrance into it.

And yet as fabulous as this account is, which Manetho gives of his taking his hiſtory from theſe pillars before the flood, I cannot but think that Joſephus, an author otherwiſe of good credit, took his famous ſtory of Seth's pillars, concerning aſtronomical obſervations before the flood, from this ſtory of Manetho; and therefore I cannot but look upon them with as jealous an eye as on the other; although I know how fond the world hath been upon that moſt ancient monument, as is pretended, of learning in the world. Du Bartas hath wrote a whole poem on theſe pillars; and the truth is, they are fitter ſubjects for poets than any elſe, as will appear on theſe conſiderations. Firſt, how ſtrangely improbable is it that the poſterity of Seth, who, as is pretended, did foreknow a deſtruction of the world to be by a flood, ſhould buſy themſelves to write aſtronomical obſervations on pillars, for the benefit of thoſe who ſhould live after it? Could they think their pillars ſhould have ſome peculiar exemption above ſtronger ſtructures, from the violence of the rough and furious waters? If they believed the flood abſolutely univerſal, for whom did they intend their obſervations? if not, to what end did they make them, when the perſons ſurviving might communicate their inventions to them? But, ſecondly, if either one or both theſe pillars remained, whence comes it to paſs that neither the Chaldæans, nor any of

of the oldeſt pretenders to aſtronomy, ſhould neither mention them, nor make any uſe of them? Nay, thirdly, whence came the ſtudy of aſtronomy to be ſo lamentably defective in thoſe ancient times, if they had ſuch certain obſervations of the heavenly bodies, gathered by ſo much experience of the perſons who lived before the flood? Fourthly, How comes Joſephus himſelf to neglect this remarkable teſtimony of the truth of Scripture-hiſtory, in his books againſt Appion, if he had thought it were ſuch as might be relied on? Fifthly, How comes Joſephus ſo careleſsly not to ſet down the place in Syria where theſe pillars ſtood, that inquiſitive perſons might have ſatisfied themſelves with the ſight of the pillar at leaſt, and what kind of characters thoſe obſervations were preſerved in? But now, if we compare this of Joſephus with Manetho's ſtory, we ſhall find them ſo exactly reſemble each other, that we may judge all thoſe pillars to have been taken out of the ſame quarry. Two things make it yet more probable. Firſt, The name of the place wherein they ſtood, which Euſtathius, in Hexaemeron, takes out of Joſephus, and calls Σηριαδὶ; the very ſame place with that in Manetho. The other is the common uſe of the name of Seth among the Egyptians, as not only appears by Plutarch *de Iſide et Oſiride*, but by this very place of Manetho; where it follows, ἐν βίβλῳ Σώθεως, a book of his bearing the title, which Vettius Valens Antiochenus tells us is not called Σῶθις, but Σήθ. Now, therefore, Joſephus, who frequently uſeth the teſtimony of Heathen writers, and frequently of this Manetho, endeavoured to bring this fabulous relation of Manetho as near the truth as he could; therefore inſtead of Thoyth he puts Seth; and inſtead of the fabulous hiſtory of Egypt, the inventions of the Patriarchs; and Syria inſtead of Seriadica; a country too large to find theſe pillars in.

Vettius Val. apud Scal. not. Gr. p. 438.

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CHAP. III.

Of the Chaldæan Hiſtory.

I. *The Conteſt of Antiquity among Heathen Nations, and the ways of deciding it.* II. *Of the* Chaldæan *Aſtrology, and the Foundation of Judicial Aſtrology.* III. *Of the* Zabii, *their Founder, who they were; no other than the old Chaldees.* IV. *Of* Beroſus *and his Hiſtory.* V. *An Account of the fabulous Dynaſties of* Beroſus *and* Manetho; VI. *From the Tranſlation of the Scripture-hiſtory into Greek, in the Time of Ptolemy.* VII. *Of that Tranſlation, and the Time of it.* VIII. *Of* Demetrius Phalereus. Scaliger's *Arguments anſwered.* IX. Manetho *writ after the Septuagint, proved againſt* Kircher; *his Arguments anſwered. Of Rabbinical and Arabic Authors, and their little Credit in Matter of Hiſtory.* X. *The Time of* Beroſus *enquired into; his Writing contemporary with* Philadelphus.

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THE next whom our enquiry leads us to, are the Chaldæans, a nation of great and undoubted antiquity, being in probability the firſt formed into a national government after the flood, and therefore the more capable of having theſe arts and ſciences flouriſh among them, which might preſerve the memory of oldeſt times to the view of poſterity. And yet even among theſe, who enjoyed all the advantages of eaſe, quiet, and a flouriſhing empire, we find no undoubted or credible records preſerved, but the ſame vanity as among the Egyptians, in arrogating antiquity to themſelves beyond all proportion of reaſon or ſatisfaction from their own hiſtory, to fill up that vaſt meaſure of time with: which makes it moſt probable, what Diodorus obſerves of them, *that in things pertaining to their arts, they made uſe of lunar years*

Diodor. Biblioth. l. i. c. 26.

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years of 30 *days*: ſo they had need, when Tully tells us that they boaſted of obſervations of the ſtars for 470,000 years. It had been impoſſible for them to have been ſo extravagant in their accounts of themſelves, had they but preſerved the hiſtory of their nation in any certain records. For want of which, the tradition of the oldeſt times varying in the ſeveral families after their diſperſion, and being gradually corrupted by the policy of their leaders, and thoſe corruptions readily embraced by the predominancy of ſelf-love in the ſeveral nations, thence aroſe thoſe vain and eager conteſts between the Chaldæans, Scythians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians, concerning the antiquity of their ſeveral nations: which may be ſeen in Diodorus and others; by which it moſt evidently appears that they had no certain hiſtory of their own nations; for none of them inſiſt upon any records, but only upon ſeveral probabilities from the nature of their country, and the climates they lived under. Neither need Pſammetichus have been put to that ridiculous way of deciding the controverſy, by his two infants bred up without any converſe with men; concluding the language they ſpake would manifeſt the great antiquity of the nation it belonged to: whereas it is more than probable they had ſpoken none at all, had they not learned the inarticulate voice of the goats, they had more converſe with than men. The making uſe of ſuch ways to decide this controverſy, doth not only argue the great weakneſs of thoſe times as to natural knowledge, but the abſolute defect and inſufficiency of them, as to the giving any certain account of the ſtate of ancient times.

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Cicero de Divin. l. ii. c. 97.

II. Of which the Chaldæans had advantages above all other Heathen nations, not only living in a ſettled country, but in or near that very place where the grand anceſtors of the world had their chief abode and reſidence. Whereby we ſee how unfaithful a thing tradition is, and how ſoon it is corrupted or fails,

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BOOK I. fails, where it hath no ſure records to bottom itſelf upon. But indeed it is the leſs wonder that there ſhould be a confuſion of hiſtories, where there had been before of tongues; and that ſuch, whoſe deſign and memory God had blaſted before, ſhould afterwards forget their own original. But, as if the Chaldæans had retained ſomething ſtill of their old aſpiring mind to reach up to heaven, the only thing they were eminent for, and which they were careful in preſerving of, was ſome aſtronomical obſervations, which Tully tells us *they had a great conveniency for, by reaſon of the plain and even ſituation of their country*; whereby they might have a larger proſpect of the heavenly bodies, than thoſe who lived in mountainous countries could have. And yet even for this (which they were ſo famous for, that the name Chaldæans paſſed for aſtrologers in the Roman empire) we have no great reaſon to admire their excellency in it, conſidering how ſoon their ſkill in aſtronomy dwindled into that which, by a great *catachreſis*, is called *judicial* aſtrology. The original of which is moſt evident among them, as all other Heathen nations, to have been from the divinity which they attributed to the ſtars; in which yet they were far more rational than thoſe who now admire that art: for, granting their hypotheſis, that the ſtars were Gods, it was but reaſonable they ſhould determine contingent effects; but it is far from being ſo with them, who take away the foundation of all thoſe celeſtial houſes, and yet attribute the ſame effects to them, which they did who believed a divinity in them. The Chaldæans, as Diodorus relates, ſet 30 ſtars under the planets; theſe they called Βελαίους Θεὰς: others they had as princes over theſe, which they called τῶν Θεῶν Κυρίας: the former were as the privy counſellors, and theſe the princes over them; by whom, in their courſes, they ſuppoſed the courſe of the year to be regulated. See then what a near affinity there was between aſtrology and the divinity of the

Diodor. l. ii. c. 30. Biblioth.

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the ſtars; which makes Ptolemy call them Atheiſts who condemned aſtrology, becauſe thereby they deſtroyed the main of their religion, which was the worſhipping the ſtars for Gods. But it ſeems by Strabo, that one of the ſects of the Chaldæans did ſo hold to aſtronomy ſtill, that they wholly rejected *genethlialogy*; which cauſed a great diviſion among the Orchoeni and Borſippeni, two ſects among them, ſo called from the places of their habitations.

CHAP. III.

Ptolem. Tetrab. l. i.

Strabo Geograph. l. xvi. p. 509.

III.

And if we reckon the Zabii among the Chaldæans, as Maimonides ſeems to do, we have a further evidence of the planetary deities, ſo much in requeſt among the Chaldæans; for the deſcription he gives of them is to this purpoſe, *that they had no other Gods but the ſtars, to whom they made ſtatues and images: to the ſun golden, to the moon ſilver; and ſo to the reſt of the planets of the metals dedicated to them. Thoſe images derived an influence from the ſtars to which they were erected, which had thence a faculty of foretelling future things*; which is an exact deſcription of the Στοιχεῖα, or Taliſmans, ſo much in requeſt among the Heathens; ſuch as the Palladium of Troy is ſuppoſed by learned men to have been. Theſe Taliſmans are by the Jews called *David's bucklers*, and are much of the ſame nature with the ancient Teraphim, both being accurately made according to the poſitions of the heavens; only the one were to foretel future things, the other for the driving away ſome calamity. Concerning theſe Zabii, Maimonides tells us, *that the underſtanding their rites would give a great deal of light to ſeveral paſſages of Scripture which now lie in obſcurity:* but little is ſuppoſed to be yet further known of them than what Scaliger hath ſaid, that they were the more Eaſtern Chaldæans; which he fetcheth from the ſignification of the word. Several of their books are extant, ſaith Scaliger, among the Arabians; but none of them are yet diſcovered to the European world. Salmaſius thinks theſe Zabii were the Chaldæans inhabiting Meſopotamia; to

Maimon. More Nevo. p. 3. c. 29.

V. Scaliger Ep. ad Caſaubon. & Ep. Gallic. Selden de Diis Syris, Syn. i. c. 2. Salmaſ. de An. Clim. p. 578.

BOOK I. which is very consonant what Maimonides saith, that *Abraham had his education among them.* Said Batricides, cited by Mr. Selden, *attributes the original of their religion to the time of Nachor, and to Zaradchath, the Persian, as the author of it*; who is conceived to be the same with Zoroaster, who in all probability is the same with the Zertooſt of the Persees, a sect of the ancient Persians living now among the Banyans in the Indies. These give a more full and exact account concerning the original, birth, education, and enthusiasms or revelations of their Zertooſt, than any we meet with in any Greek historians. Three books they tell us of, which Zertooſt received by revelation, or rather one book, consisting of three several tracts: whereof the first was concerning judicial astrology, which they call Astoodeger; the second concerning physic, or the knowledge of natural things; the third was called Zertooſt, from the bringer of it, containing their religious rites. The first was committed to the *jesopps*, or *magi*; the second to *physicians*; the third to the *darooes*, or churchmen; wherein are contained the several precepts of their law. We have likewise the rites and customs of these Persees in their worship of fire, with many other particular rites of theirs, published some time since by one Mr. Lord, who was a long time resident among them at Surat; by which we may not only understand much of the religion of the ancient Persians, but, if I mistake not, somewhat of the Zabii too. My reasons are, because the ancient Zaradcha, or Zoroaster, is by Saïd Batricides made the author of the Zabii, as we have seen already, who was undoubtedly the founder of the Persian worship, or rather a promoter of it among the Persians; for Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, that he was instructed in the rites of the Chaldæans, which he added to the Persian rites. Besides, their agreement in the chief point of idolatry, the worship of the sun, and consequently the Πυραιθεία, or symbol of the

Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent. l. ii. c. 7.

Am. Marc. Hist. l. xxiii. p. 419. Edit. Francof.

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the ſun, the eternal fire, is evident; which, as far as we can learn, was the great and moſt early idolatry of the Eaſtern countries. And further we find God, in Leviticus xxvi. 30. threatening to deſtroy their חמנים, *their images of the ſun*, ſome render it; but moſt probably by that word is meant the Πυραιθεῖα, *the hearths* where they kept their perpetual fire; for thoſe are חמנים from חמה, which is uſed both for the *ſun* and *fire*. Now hence it appears that this idolatry was in uſe among the nations about Paleſtine, elſe there had been no need of ſo ſevere a threatening againſt it; and therefore moſt probably the rites of the Zabii (which muſt help us to explain the reaſons of ſome particular poſitive precepts in the Levitical law relating to idolatry) are the ſame with the rites of the Chaldæans and Perſians, who all agreed in this worſhip of the ſun and fire; which may be yet more probable from what Maimonides ſaith of them, *Gens Zabia erat gens quæ implevit totum orbem:* it could not be then any obſcure nation, but ſuch as had the largeſt ſpread in the Eaſtern countries; which could be no other than the ancient Chaldæans, from whom the Perſians derived their worſhip. It may not ſeem altogether improbable that Balaam, the famous ſoothſayer, was one of theſe Zabii, eſpecially if, according to Salmaſius's judgment, they inhabited Meſopotamia; for Balaam's country ſeems to be there; for it is ſaid, Num. xxii. 5. *that he dwelt in Pethor, by the river*, i. e. ſaith the Chaldee paraphraſt, *in Peor of Syria, by Euphrates*, which in Scripture is called *the river*. Eſa. viii. 7. But from this great obſcurity as to the hiſtory of ſo ancient and ſo large a people as theſe Zabii are ſuppoſed to be, we have a further evidence to our purpoſe, of the defectiveneſs and inſufficiency of the Eaſtern hiſtories, as to the giving any full account of themſelves and their own original.

CHAP. III.

V. Voſſ. Idol. l. ii. c. 9.

IV. We are told indeed by ſome, that Nabonaſſar did burn and deſtroy all the ancient records of the Chal-

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dæans, which they had diligently preſerved among them before, on purpoſe to raiſe the greater reputation to himſelf, and blot out the memory of his uſurpation, by burning the records of all their own ancient kings; which is a conceit, I ſuppoſe, that hath no other ground than that the famous era, ſo much celebrated by aſtronomers and others, did bear the name of Nabonaſſar; which (if we ſhould be ſo greedy of all empty conjectures, which tend to our purpoſe, as to take them for truths) would be a very ſtrong evidence of the falſehood and vanity of the Chaldæans, in their great pretences to antiquity. But, as the caſe ſtands in reference to their hiſtory, we find more evidence from Scripture to aſſert their juſt antiquity, than ever they are able to produce out of any undoubted records of their own: which yet hath been endeavoured by an author both of ſome credit and antiquity, the true Beroſus, not the counterfeit of Annius; whoſe vizard we ſhall have occaſion to pull off afterwards. This Beroſus was, as Joſephus and Tatianus aſſure us, *a prieſt of Belus, and a Babylonian born, but afterwards flouriſhed in the iſle of Cos, and was the firſt who brought the Chaldæan aſtrology in requeſt among the Greeks*; in honour to whoſe name and memory the Athenians (who were never backward in applauding thoſe who brought them the greateſt news, eſpecially if ſuitable to their former ſuperſtition) erected a ſtatue for him, with a gilded tongue: a good emblem of his hiſtory, which made a fair and ſpecious ſhew, but was not that within which it pretended to be; eſpecially where he pretends to give an account of the moſt ancient times, and reckons up his two dynaſties before the time of Belus: but of them afterwards. It cannot be denied but ſome fragments of his hiſtory, which have been preſerved from ruin by the care and induſtry of Joſephus, Tatianus, Euſebius, and others, have been very uſeful, not only for proving the truth of the hiſtory of Scripture to the Heathens, but alſo for

Joſeph. c. App. l. i. c. 19. Tatian. c. Græcos.

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for illuſtrating ſome paſſages concerning the Babylonian empire: as making Nabopolaſſar the father of Nebuchadonoſor; of which Scaliger hath fully ſpoken in his notes upon thoſe fragments. CHAP. III. Scaliger Append. ad l. de Emen. Temp. V.

Far be it from me to derogate any thing even from profane hiſtories, where they do not interfere with the ſacred hiſtory of Scripture; and it is certainly the beſt improvement of theſe to make them *draw water to the ſanctuary*, and to ſerve as ſmaller ſtars to conduct us in our way, when we cannot enjoy the benefit of that greater light of ſacred hiſtory. But that which I impeach theſe profane hiſtories of, is only an inſufficiency as to that account of ancient times; wherein they are ſo far from giving light to ſacred records, that the deſign of ſetting of them up ſeems to be for caſting a cloud upon them: which may ſeem ſomewhat the more probable, in that thoſe monſtrous accounts of the Egyptian and Chaldæan Dynaſties did never publicly appear in the world in the Greek tongue, till the time that our ſacred records were tranſlated into Greek at Alexandria. For till that time, when this authentic hiſtory of the world was drawn forth from its privacy and retirement into the public notice of the world, about the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus (being as it were locked up before among the Iſraelites at Judæa), theſe vain pretenders to antiquity thought not themſelves ſo much concerned to ſtand up for the credit of their own nations; for till that time the credulous world, not being acquainted with any certain report of the creation and propagation of the world, was apt to ſwallow any thing that was given forth by thoſe who were had in ſo great eſteem as the Chaldæan and the Egyptian prieſts were. Becauſe it was ſuppoſed that thoſe perſons, who were freed from other avocations, had more leiſure to enquire into theſe things; and becauſe of their myſterious hiding what they had from the vulgar, they were preſumed to have a great deal more than they had.

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BOOK I. But now, when the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* was approaching this horizon of the world, and in order to that the ſacred hiſtory, like the day-ſtar, was to give the world notice of it, by which the former ſhadows and miſts began to fly away, it concerned all thoſe, whoſe intereſt lay in the former ignorance of mankind, as much as they could, to raiſe all their *ignes fatui*, and whatever might tend to obſcure that approaching light, by invalidating the credit of that which came to beſpeak its acceptance.

VI. It is very obſervable what gradations and ſteps there were in the world to the appearance of that grand light, which came down from heaven to direct us in our way thither; how the world, not long before, was awakened into a greater inquiſitiveneſs than ever before; how knowledge grew into repute, and what methods divine Providence uſed to give the inquiſitive world a taſte of truth at preſent to ſtay their ſtomachs, and prepare them for that further diſcovery of it afterwards. In order to this, that nation of the Jews, which was an incloſed garden before, was now thrown open, and many of the plants removed, and ſet in foreign countries; not only in Babylon (where, even after their return, were left three famous ſchools of learning, Sora, Pombeditha, and Neharda), but in Egypt too, where multitudes of them, by Alexander's favour, were ſettled at Alexandria, where they had opportunity to ſeaſon thoſe two great fountains, whence the current of knowledge ran into the reſt of the world. And now it was not in *Jewry only that God was known*; but *he whoſe name was great in Iſrael* did make way for the knowledge of himſelf among all the nations of the earth. And that all-wiſe God, who directed the Magi by a ſtar to Chriſt, making uſe of their former ſkill in aſtronomy to take notice of that ſtar, which came now on a peculiar errand to them, to lead them to their Saviour (the great God condeſcending ſo far to mankind, as to take advantage of particular inclinations,

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tions, and to accommodate himſelf to them; for which purpoſe it is very obſervable that he appeared in another way to the wiſe men than to the poor ſhepherds), the ſame God made uſe of the curioſity and inquiſitiveneſs after knowledge, which was in Ptolemæus Philadelphus (which he is ſo much applauded for by Athenæus and others) to bring to light the moſt advantageous knowledge which the world ever had before the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh. And that great library of his erecting at Alexandria, did never deſerve that title till it had lodged thoſe ſacred records; and then it did far better than the old one of Oſymanduas, of which hiſtorians tell us this was the inſcription, Ἰατρεῖον ψυχῆς, *The ſhop of the ſoul's phyſic.*

CHAP. III.

V. Caſaub. ad Athenæum, l. v. c. 9.

But this being a matter of ſo much concernment in order to our better underſtanding the original of theſe vaſt accounts of time among the Chaldæans and Egyptians, and a ſubject not yet touched by any, we ſhall a little farther improve the probability of it, by taking a more particular account of the time when the Scriptures were firſt tranſlated, and the occaſion might thereby be given to theſe Egyptians and Chaldæans, to produce their fabulous account into the view of the world. Whether the Scriptures had been ever before tranſlated into the Greek language (though it be aſſerted by ſome ancient writers of the Church), is very queſtionable, chiefly upon this account, that a ſufficient reaſon cannot be aſſigned of undertaking a new tranſlation at Alexandria, if there had been any extant before; eſpecially if all thoſe circumſtances of that tranſlation be true, which are commonly received and delivered down to us with almoſt an unanimous conſent of the perſons, who had greater advantages of knowing the certainty of ſuch things, than we can have at this great diſtance of time. And therefore certainly every petty conjecture of ſome modern, though learned men, ought not to bear ſway againſt ſo una-

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nimous a tradition in a matter of fact, which cannot be capable of being proved but by the teſtimony of former ages. And it is ſomewhat ſtrange that the ſingle teſtimony of one Hermippus, in Diogenes Laertius (whoſe age and authority is ſomewhat doubtful), concerning only one particular referring to Demetrius Phalereus, ſhould be thought of force enough among perſons of judgment, as well as learning, to infringe the credibility of the whole ſtory, delivered with ſo much conſent not only by Chriſtian, but Jewiſh writers; the teſtimony of one of which (every whit as conſiderable as Hermippus), viz. Ariſtobulus Judæus, a Peripatetical philoſopher, in an epiſtle to Ptolemæus Philometor, doth plainly aſſert that, which was ſo much queſtioned, concerning Demetrius Phalereus.

Diog. Laer. Vit. Demetrii.

Apud Euſ. Præp. Ev. l. xiii. c. 12.

VIII. But whatever the truth of all the particular circumſtances be, which I here enquire not after, nor the authority of that Ariſtæus, from whom the ſtory is received, nor whether this tranſlation was made by Jews ſent out of Judæa, or by Jews reſiding at Alexandria, it ſufficeth for our purpoſe, that this tranſlation was made before either the Chaldæan Dynaſties of Beroſus, or the Egyptian of Manetho, were publiſhed to the world. In order to which, it is neceſſary to ſhew in what time this tranſlation was effected; and herein that channel of tradition, which conveys the truth of the thing in one certain courſe, runs not with ſo even a ſtream concerning the exact time of it: all indeed agree that it was about the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, but in what years of his reign is very dubious. Joſeph Scaliger, who hath troubled the waters ſo much concerning the particular circumſtances of this tranſlation, yet fully agrees that it was done in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus; only he contends with Africanus, that it ſhould be done in the 132d Olympiad, which is in the 33d year of Ptolemæus Philadelphus: but Euſebius and Jerom place it in the very beginning of his

Scaliger Animad. ad Num. Euſ. 1734.

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his reign; which I think is far more probable, and that in the time when Ptolemæus Philadelphus reigned with his father Ptolemæus Lagi; for ſo it is moſt certain he did for two years before his father's death: by which means the great difficulty of Scaliger concerning Demetrius Phalereus, is quite taken off; for Hermippus ſpeaks nothing of Demetrius's being out of favour with Philadelphus during his father's life; but that upon his father's death he was baniſhed by him, and died in his baniſhment; ſo that Demetrius might have the overſight of the library at Alexandria, and be the main inſtrument of promoting this tranſlation; and yet thoſe things be after true which Hermippus ſpeaks, viz. when Ptolemæus Lagi, or Soter, was now dead. For it ſtands not to reaſon that during his father's life Philadelphus ſhould diſcover his diſpleaſure againſt Demetrius, it being conceived upon the advice given to his father for preferring the ſons of Arſinoë to the crown before the ſon of Berenice. Moſt likely therefore it is that this tranſlation might be begun by the means of Demetrius Phalereus, in the time of Philadelphus's reigning with his father; but, it may be, not finiſhed till after the death of Soter, when Philadelphus reigned alone. And by this now we can perfectly reconcile that difference which is among the Fathers, concerning the time when this tranſlation was made; for Irenæus attributes it to the time of Ptolemæus Lagi; Clemens Alexandrinus queſtions whether in the time of Lagi or Philadelphus; the reſt of the chorus carry it for Philadelphus: but the words of Anatolius in Euſebius caſt it fully for both; for there, ſpeaking of Ariſtobulus, he ſaith, *He was one of the ſeventy who interpreted the Scriptures to Ptolemæus Philadelphus and his father, and dedicated his Commentaries upon the Law to both thoſe kings. Hæc ſane omnem ſcrupulum eximunt*, ſaith Voſſius, upon producing this teſtimony, *this puts it out of all doubt*;

V. Scaliger. ib. Theocr. Schol. ad Idyl. 17. Juſt. l. xvi. Euſ. Chro. Gr.

Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. vii. c. 32. p. 369. Ed. Cant.

Voſſius de Hiſt. Græc. lib. i. c. 12.

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doubt; and to the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks the learned Jeſuit Petavius, in his notes on Epiphanius.

Petav. ad Epiph. p. 380.

Having thus far cleared the time when the tranſlation of the Scriptures into Greek was made, we ſhall find our conjecture much ſtrengthened, by comparing this with the age of the forementioned hiſtorians, Manetho and Beroſus. Manetho we have already made appear to have lived in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus; and that, ſaith Voſſius, after the death of Soter. It is evident, from what remains of him in Euſebius's Chronica, that he not only flouriſhed in the time of Philadelphus, but writ his hiſtory at the ſpecial command of Philadelphus, as manifeſtly appears by the remaining epiſtle of Manetho to him, ſtill extant in Euſebius. This command of Philadelphus might very probably be occaſioned upon the view of that account which the holy Scriptures, being then tranſlated into Greek, did give of the world, and the propagation of mankind; upon which, we cannot imagine but ſo inquiſitive a perſon as Philadelphus would be very earneſt to have his curioſity ſatisfied, as to what the Egyptian prieſts (who had boaſted ſo much of antiquity) could produce to confront with the Scriptures. Whereupon the taſk was undertaken by this Manetho, High Prieſt of Heliopolis; whereby thoſe things which the Egyptian prieſts had to that time kept ſecret in their cloiſters, were now divulged and expoſed to the judgment of the learned world; but what ſatisfaction they were able to give inquiſitive minds as to the main Ζητούμενον, or *matter enquired after*, may partly appear by what hath been ſaid of Manetho already, and by what ſhall be ſpoken of his Dynaſties afterwards.

IX.

Euſ. Chro. Gr. p. 6.

But all this will not perſuade Kircher; for, whatever Scaliger, nay, what Manetho himſelf ſaith to the contrary, he with the confidence and learning of a Jeſuit affirms, that this Manetho is older than Alexander

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ander the Great. For these are his words: *Frequens apud priscos historicos Dynastiarum Egyptiacarum fit mentio, quarum tamen alium authorem non habemus nisi Manethonem Sebennytam, Sacerdotem Egyptium, quem ante tempora Alexandri, quicquid dicat Scaliger, in Egypto floruisse comperio.* Certainly some more than ordinary evidence may be expected after so confident an affirmation; but whatever that person be in other undertakings, he is as unhappy a person in philology, as any that have pretended so much acquaintance with it. One would think he that had been twenty years, as he tells us himself, courting the Egyptian mysteries for compassing his Oedipus, should have found some better arguments to prove an assertion of this nature, than merely the testimony of Josephus, the Hebrew book *Juchasin*, and some Arabic writers; not one of all which do mention the thing they are brought for, viz. *that Manetho was older than Alexander*. All the business is, they quote him as an ancient writer; but what then? The author of the book *Juchasin*, was Abraham Zachuth, a Jew of Salamanca, who writ in the year of our Lord 1505; and this book was first printed at Constantinople, 1556. Might not this man, then, well mention Manetho as an ancient writer, if he flourished above 1600 years before him, in the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus? And what if some Arabic writers mention him? Are they of so great antiquity and credit themselves, that it is an evidence Manetho lived in Alexander's time to be praised by them? It would be well if Kircher, and other learned men, who think the world is grown to so great stupidity as to believe every thing to be a jewel which is far fetched, would first assert and vindicate the antiquity and fidelity of their Arabic authors, such as Gelaldinus, Abenephi, and many others, before they expect we should part with our more authentic records of history, for those fabulous relations which they are so full fraught withal. Were it here any part of my present

CHAP. III.

Oedip. Egypt. to. i. Syn. i. c. 9.

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preſent buſineſs, it were an eaſy matter ſo to lay open the ignorance, falſity, and fabulouſneſs of thoſe Arabians, whom that author relies ſo much upon, that he could not be freed from a deſign to impoſe upon the world; who makes uſe of their teſtimony in matters of ancient times, without a *caveat*. I know none fit to believe theſe Arabic writers as to theſe things, but thoſe who have faith enough to concoct the Rabbins in matter of hiſtory; of whom Origen ſaith, Πάντα μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων τῶν νῦν μῦθοι καὶ λῆροι, who are, as Grotius truly ſaith, *peſſimi hiſtoriæ magiſtri; nam ex quo patria expulſi ſunt, omnis apud illos hiſtoria craſſis erroribus & fabulis eſt inquinata, quibus & proinde nihil credendum eſt, niſi aliunde teſtes acceſſerint.* And If. Caſaubon paſſeth this ſharp, but due cenſure, upon them, *Rabbinis, ubi de lingua Hebraica agitur & vocis alicujus proprietate, vel aliquo Talmudico inſtituto merito a Chriſtianis tribui non parum; ubi vero à verbis venitur ad res, aut ad hiſtoriam, vel rerum antiquarum veteris populi explicationem, niſi falli & decipi volumus, nihil admodum eſſe illis fidei habendum. Sexcentis argumentis hoc facile probarem, ſi id nunc agerem.* And in reference to their ancient rites, as well as hiſtory, Joſeph Scaliger hath given this verdict of them, *Manifeſta eſt Judæorum inſcitia, qui cum uſu veterum rituum etiam eorum cognitionem amiſerunt, ut multa quæ ad eorum ſacra et hiſtoriam pertinent, longe melius nos teneamus quam ipſi.* The ſame which theſe very learned perſons ſay of Rabbinical, may with as much truth be ſaid of theſe Arabic writers, in matters of ancient hiſtory, which I have here inſerted, to ſhew the reaſon why I have thought the teſtimony of either of theſe two ſorts of perſons ſo inconſiderable in the matter of our future diſcourſe; which being hiſtorical, and that of the greateſt antiquity, little relief is to be expected from either of them in order thereto. But to return to Kircher. It is freely granted that Joſephus, an author of credit and age ſufficient to give his opinion in this caſe, doth very frequently cite Manetho in his Egyptian hiſtory, particularly in his learned books againſt Appion;

Origen. c. Celſ. l. ii. p. 60.

Grotius Annot. in Matth. xxiv. 24.

Caſaub. Exercit. ad Baron. 16. ſ. 8.

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. vi.

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pion; but where he doth give the leaſt intimation of Manetho being older than Alexander, I am yet to ſeek. But Kircher will not yet leave the matter ſo, but undertakes to give an account of the miſtake; which is, that there were two Manetho's beſides, and both Egyptians, mentioned by Suidas; one a Mendeſian, who writ of the preparation of the Egyptian Κῦφι, a kind of perfume uſed by the Egyptian prieſts. The other a Dioſpolitan, who writ ſome phyſiological and aſtronomical treatiſes; whoſe works, he hears, are preſerved in the Duke of Florence's library; and this was he, ſaith he, who lived in the times of Auguſtus, whom many, by the equivocation of the name, have confounded with the ancient writer of the Egyptian Dynaſties. Is it poſſible ſo learned a Jeſuit ſhould diſcover ſo little judgment in ſo few words? For, firſt, who ever aſſerted the writer of the Dynaſties to have lived in the time of Auguſtus? Yet, ſecondly, if that Manetho, whom Suidas there ſpeaks of, lived in Auguſtus's time, according to Kircher, then it muſt neceſſarily follow that the compiler of the Dynaſties did: for it is evident to any one that looks into Suidas, that he there ſpeaks of the ſame Manetho; for theſe are his words: Μανεθῶς ἐκ Διοσπόλεως τῆς Αἰγύπτιος, ἢ Σεβεννύτης, φυσιολογικὰ, &c. Can any thing be more plain, than that he here ſpeaks of Manetho Sebennyta, who was the author of the Dynaſties; though he might write other things beſides, of which Suidas there ſpeaks? But Kircher very wiſely, in tranſlating Suidas's words, leaves out Σεβεννύτης, which decides the controverſy, and makes it clear that he ſpeaks of the ſame Manetho of whom we have been diſcourſing. Thus it ſtill appears that this Manetho is no older than the time of Ptolemæus Philadelphus; which was the thing to be proved. CHAP. III.

Now for Beroſus, although the Chaldæans had occaſion enough given them before this time to produce their antiquities by the Jews converſe with them in Babylon, yet we find this author the firſt who X.

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who durſt adventure them abroad, ſuch as they were, in Greek. Now that this Beroſus publiſhed his hiſtory after the time mentioned, I thus prove. Tatianus Aſſyrius tells us, that he writ the Chaldaic hiſtory in three books, and dedicated them to Antiochus, τῷ μετὰ Σέλευκον τρίτῳ, as it is read in the fragment of Tatianus, preſerved in Euſebius; but it muſt be acknowledged, that in the Paris edition of Tatianus, as well as the Baſil, it is thus read, καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον γεγονὼς, Ἀντιόχῳ τῷ μεῖ' αὐτὸν τρίτῳ. Here it relates to the *third* from Alexander; in the other, to the *third* from Seleucus. Now if we reckon the *third* ſo as to take in the perſon from whom we reckon for the *firſt*, according to the reading in Euſebius, it falls to be Antiochus called Θεὸς; according to the other reading it falls to be Antiochus Soter; for Seleucus ſucceeded Alexander in the kingdom of Syria; Antiochus Soter, Seleucus; Antiochus Θεὸς, Antiochus Soter. But according to either of theſe readings, our purpoſe is ſufficiently proved: for Antiochus Soter began to reign in Syria in the *ſixth* year of Ptolemæus Philadelphus in Egypt; Antiochus Θεὸς ſucceeded him in the 22d year of Philadelphus: now the ſooneſt that the hiſtory of Beroſus could come forth, muſt be in the reign of Antiochus Soter; which, according to our accounts, is ſome competent time after the tranſlation of the Scripture into Greek. But, if it were not till the time of Antiochus Θεὸς, we cannot but imagine that the report of the account of ancient times in the Scriptures was ſufficiently divulged before the publiſhing of this hiſtory of Beroſus; and, it may be, Beroſus might ſomewhat ſooner than others underſtand all tranſactions at Alexandria, becauſe the place of his chief reſidence was where Ptolemæus Philadelphus was born; which was in the iſle of Cos. But Voſſius goes another way to work to prove the time of Beroſus, which is this: He quotes it out of Pliny, that Beroſus recorded the hiſtory of 480 years; which,

Euſeb. Præp. Evang. l. x. c. 11. p. 493.

V. Scal. de Emend. Temp. l. v. p. 392.

Voſſius de Hiſt. Græc. l. i. c. 13. Plin. Hiſt. Nat. l. vii. c. 57. Ed. Hard. legit 490.

which, ſaith he, muſt be reckoned from the era of Nabonaſſar. Now this began in the ſecond year of the 8th Olympiad; from which time if we reckon 480 years, it falls upon the latter end of Antiochus Soter; and ſo his hiſtory could not come out before the 22d of Ptolemæus Philadelphus, or very little before. Thus we have made it evident, that theſe two great hiſtorians are younger even than the tranſlation of the Bible into Greek; by which it appears probable that they were provoked to publiſh their fabulous Dynaſties to the world. And ſo much to ſhew the inſufficiency of the Chaldæan hiſtory, as to the account of ancient times: which we ſhall conclude with the cenſure of Strabo, a grave and judicious author, concerning the antiquities of the Perſians, Medes, and Syrians; *which*, ſaith he, *have not obtained any great credit in the world*, διὰ τὴν τῶν συγγραφέων ἀπλότητα καὶ τὴν φιλομυθίαν, *becauſe of the ſimplicity and fabulouſneſs of their hiſtorians*. From hence we ſee, then, that there is no great credibility in thoſe hiſtories, which are impeached of falſehood by the moſt grave and judicious of Heathen writers.

Strab. l. xi. p. 349. Ed. Caſaub.

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CHAP. IV.

The Defect of the Grecian Hiſtory.

I. *That manifeſted by three evident arguments of it.* (1.) *The Fabulouſneſs of the poetical Age of* Greece. *The Antiquity of Poetry.* II. *Of* Orpheus *and the ancient Poets. Whence the poetical Fables borrowed.* III. *The Advancement of Poetry and Idolatry together in* Greece. IV. *The different Cenſures of* Strabo *and* Eratoſthenes, *concerning the poetical Age of* Greece; *and the Reaſons of them.* V. (2.) *The oldeſt Hiſtorians of Greece are of ſuſpected Credit. Of* Damaſtes, Ariſteus, *and others*; VI. *Of moſt of their oldeſt Hiſtorians we have nothing left but their Names; of others only the Subjects they treated of, and ſome Fragments.* VIII. (3.) *Thoſe that are extant either confeſs their ignorance of eldeſt Times, or plainly diſcover it. Of the firſt Sort are* Thucydides *and* Plutarch. IX. *Several Evidences of the* Grecians *Ignorance of the true Original of Nations.* X. *Of* Herodotus *and his Miſtakes.* XI. *The* Greeks *Ignorance in Geography diſcovered; and thence their Inſufficiency as to an Account of ancient Hiſtory.*

BOOK I. 1.

DESCEND we now to the hiſtory of Greece; to ſee whether the metropolis of arts and learning can afford us any account of ancient times, that may be able to make us in the leaſt queſtion the account given of them in ſacred Scriptures. We have already manifeſted the defect of Greece as to letters and ancient records; but yet it may be pretended that her hiſtorians, by the excellency of their wits, and ſearching abroad into other nations, might find a more certain account of ancient times, than other nations could obtain. There is nobody, who is any thing acquainted with the Grecian humour, but

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but will say they were beholden to their wits for most of their histories: they being some of the earliest writers of romances in the world, if all fabulous narrations may bear that name. But laying aside at present all their poetic *mythology*, as it concerns their Gods (which we may have occasion to enquire into afterwards), we now examine only their credibility, where they pretend to be most historical. Yet how far they are from meriting belief even in these things, will appear to any that shall consider, first, that their most ancient writers were poetical, and apparently fabulous; secondly, that their eldest historians are of suspected credit even amongst themselves; thirdly, that their best historians either discover or confess abundance of ignorance as to the history of ancient times. First, that their first writers were poetical, and apparently fabulous. Strabo undertakes to prove that prose is only an imitation of poetry; and so poetry must needs be first written. *For*, saith he, *at first poetry only was in request; afterwards, in imitation of that, Cadmus, Pherecydes, and Hecatæus writ their histories, observing all other laws of poetry but only the measures of it; but by degrees writers began to take greater liberty, and so brought it down from that lofty strain it was then in, to the form now in use: as the comic strain is nothing else but a depressing the sublimer style of tragedy.* This he proves, because ἄδειν did anciently signify the same with φράζειν; for poems were only λόγοι μεμελισμένοι, lessons fit to be sung among them: thence, saith he, is the original of the Ῥαψωδίαι, &c. for these were those poems which were sung ἐπὶ ῥάβδῳ, when they held a branch of laurel in their hands, as Plutarch tells us they were wont to sing Homer's Ilias; others were sung to the harp, as Hesiod's Ἔργα; besides, saith Strabo, that prose is called ὁ πεζὸς λόγος, argues that it is only a bringing down of the higher strain in use before. But however this were in general; as to the Grecians, it is evident that poetry was first in use among them; for

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Strabo, l. 1. p. 12.

Plutarch. Sympos.

BOOK I. in their elder times, when they firſt began to creep out of barbariſm, all the philoſophy and inſtruction they had was from their poets, and was all couched in verſe; which Plutarch not only confirms, but particularly inſtanceth in Orpheus, Heſiod, Parmenides, Xenophanes, Empedocles, and Thales; and hence Horace *de Arte Poetica* ſays of the ancient poets before Homer,

Plutarch. de Pyth. Orac. p. 402. Ed. Xyl.

> ——— *fuit hæc ſapientia quondam*
> *Publica privatis ſecernere, ſacra profanis:*
> *Concubitu prohibere vago: dare jura maritis:*
> *Oppida moliri: leges incidere ligno.*
> *Sic honor & nomen divinis vatibus atque*
> *Carminibus venit.*

Heinſ. Diſſ. in Heſ. cap. 6. From hence, as Heinſius obſerves, the poets were anciently called Διδάσκαλοι; and the ancient ſpeeches of the philoſophers, containing matters of morality, were called Ἄσματα καὶ Ἀδόμενα; of which many are mentioned in their lives by Diogenes Laertius. In the ſame ſenſe were *carmina* anciently uſed among the Latins, for precepts of morality; as in that collection of them which goes under the name of Cato, (which ſome think to be an ancient piece, but with a falſe inſcription; but Boxhornius thinks it to be of ſome Chriſtian's doing, in the decay of the Roman empire) *Si Deus eſt animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt.* *Carmina*, ſaith Heinſius, i. e. *dicta philoſophorum*; *cauſa eſt, quia dicta illa brevia, quibus ſententias ſuas de Deo deque reliquis includebant, ἀδόμενα dicebant*, i. e. *carmina*.

Boxhorn. Qu. Rom. c. 14.

II. When poetry came firſt into requeſt among the Grecians, is ſomewhat uncertain; but this is plain and evident, that the intention of it was not merely for inſtruction, but, as Strabo expreſſeth it, δημαγωγεῖν καὶ ϛρατηγεῖν τὰ πλήθη, *the more gently to draw the people on to idolatry*. For, as he ſaith, *it is impoſſible to perſuade women, and the promiſcuous multitude, to religion, by mere dry reaſon or philoſophy*, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ διὰ

διὰ δεισιδαιμονίας, τοῦτο δ' ἐκ ἄνευ μυθοποιΐας καὶ τερατείας; *but for this*, ſaith he, *there is need of ſuperſtition, and this cannot be advanced without ſome fables and wonders. For*, ſaith he, *the thunderbolts, ſhields, tridents, ſerpents, ſpears, attributed to the Gods, are mere fables, and ſo is all the ancient theology; but the governors of the commonwealth made uſe of theſe things, the better to awe the ſilly multitude, and to bring them into better order.* I cannot tell how far this might be their end, ſince theſe things were not brought in ſo much by the ſeveral magiſtrates, as by the endeavour of particular men, who thought to raiſe up their own eſteem among the vulgar by ſuch things, and were employed by the great deceiver of the world, as his grand inſtruments to advance idolatry in it. For which we are to conſider, that, although there were groſs ignorance, and conſequently ſuperſtition enough in Greece before the poetic age of it, yet their ſuperſtitious and idolatrous worſhip was not ſo licked and brought into form, as about the time of Orpheus, from whom the poetic age commenceth, who was as great an inſtrument of ſetting up idolatry, as Apollonius was afterwards of reſtoring it; being both perſons of the higheſt eſteem and veneration among the heathen. Much about the ſame time did thoſe live in the world who were the firſt great promoters of ſuperſtition and poetry; as Melampus, Muſæus, Arion Methymnæus, Amphion of Thebes, and Eumolpus Thrax; none of whom were very diſtant from the time of Orpheus, of whom Clemens Alexandrinus thus ſpeaks, Προσχήματι μουσικῆς λυμηνάμενοι τὸν βίον ἐντέχνῳ τινὶ γοητείᾳ——τὲς ἀνθρώπες ἐπὶ τὰ εἴδωλα χειραγωγῆσι πρῶτοι. *Theſe, under a pretence of muſic and poetry, corrupting the lives of men, did, by a kind of artificial magic, firſt draw them on to the practice of idolatry.* For the novelty and pleaſingneſs of muſic and poetry did preſently inſinuate itſelf into the minds of men, and thereby drew them to a venerable eſteem both of the perſons and prac-

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Strabo, l. i. p. 13.

Clem. Al. Protreptic. p. 4. Ed. Oxon.

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tices of thoſe who were the authors of them. So Conon in Photius tells us, that Orpheus was exceedingly acceptable to the people for his ſkill in muſic, which the Thracians and Macedonians were much delighted with; from which aroſe the fable of his drawing trees and wild beaſts after him; becauſe his muſic had ſo great an influence upon the civiliſing that people, who were almoſt grown rude through ignorance and barbariſm: and ſo Horace explains it,

Phot. Bibl. Cod. 186. ſect. 45.

Horat. Ep. ad Piſon.

Sylveſtres homines ſacer interpreſque Deorum
Cædibus & victu fœdo deterruit Orpheus,
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidoſque leones.

This Orpheus by mythologiſts is uſually called the ſon of Calliope; but may with better reaſon be called the father of the whole chorus of Muſes, than the ſon of one of them; ſince Pindar calls him Πατέρα ἀοιδᾶς: and John Tzetzes tells us he was called the ſon of Calliope, ὡς καλλιλογίας ποιητικῆς εὑρετὴς καὶ ὕμνων τῶν εἰς τὰς θεὰς, *as the inventor of poetical elegancy, and the ſacred hymns which were made to the Gods* (which the old Romans called *Aſſamenta)*; and Juſtin Martyr calls him τῆς πολυθεότητος πρῶτον διδάσκαλον, *the firſt teacher of polytheiſm and idolatry.*

Schol. in Heſiod. p. 8.

Parænef. 1.

III. For this Orpheus having been in Egypt, as Pauſanias, Diodorus, and Artapanus in Euſebius, all confeſs, he brought from thence moſt of the magical rites and ſuperſtitious cuſtoms in uſe there, and ſet them up among the Grecians; ſo Diodorus acknowledgeth in the ſame place; and it is likewiſe evident by what Ariſtophanes ſaith in his Βάτραχοι,

Pauſ. Eliac. 2. p. 383. Ed. Xyl. Diod. Bibl. lib. i. Euſ. Præp. l. ix. p. 432.

Ariſtoph. Ran. Act. iv. ſc. 2.

Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετὰς θ' ἡμῖν κατέδειξε, φόνων τ' ἀπέχεσθαι.

Orpheus firſt inſtructed them in the ſacred myſteries, and to abſtain from ſlaughter: which is to be underſtood of the βυσίαι, *the killing of beaſts in ſacrifice*; which probably was in uſe among them before, as a remainder of ancient tradition, till Orpheus brought his Egyptian doctrine into requeſt among them. The myſteries

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myſteries of Oſiris, ſaith Diodorus, were tranſplanted into Greece, under the name of Dionyſus or Bacchus, and Iſis under Ceres or Magna Mater, and the puniſhment and pleaſures after this life from the rites of ſepulture among them; Charon's wafting of ſouls from the lake Acheruſia, in Egypt, over which they were wont to ſend the dead bodies. Pauſanias tells us, that the Spartans derived the worſhip of Ceres Chthonia from Orpheus; and the Æginetæ the worſhip of Hecate: beſides which he inſtituted new rites and myſteries of his own, in which the initiated were called Ὀρφωτελεσταί, and required a moſt ſolemn oath from all of them never to divulge them; which was after obſerved in all thoſe profane myſteries, which, in imitation of theſe, were ſet up among the Greeks. Strabo thinks the myſteries of Orpheus were in imitation of the old Cotyttian and Bendidian myſteries among the Thracians; but Herodotus, with more probability, parallels them and the Dionyſian with the Egyptian, from which we have already ſeen that Orpheus derived his, who is conceived by Georgius Cedrenus, and Timotheus in Euſebius, to have lived about the time of Gideon, the judge of Iſrael; but there is too great confuſion concerning his age, to define any thing certainly about it. Which ariſeth moſt from the ſeveral perſons going under this name; of which, beſides this, were in all probability two more; the one an heroic poet, called by Suidas, Ciconæus, or Arcas, who lived two ages before Homer; and he that goes under the name of Orpheus, whoſe hymns are ſtill extant, but are truly aſcribed to Onomacritus the Athenian, by Clemens Alexandrinus, Tatianus Aſſyrius, Suidas, and others, who flouriſhed in the times of the Piſiſtratidæ at Athens. We are like then to have little relief for finding out of truth in the poetic age of Greece, when the main deſign of the learning then uſed was only to inſinuate the belief of

Pauſ. Lac. p. 186. Ed. Xyl. Corinth. p. 140. Vide Cæl. Rhod. Ant. Lect. l. xv. p. 9.

Strabo, l. x. p. 324.

Herod. Euterp.

Suid. in Ὀρφ.

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fables into the people, and by that to awe them into idolatry.

IV. If we come lower down to the ſucceeding poets, we may find fables increaſing ſtill in the times of Homer, Heſiod, and the reſt; which made Eratoſthenes, a perſon of great judgment and learning (whence he was called *alter Plato*, and Πένταθλος, and τὸ Βῆτα, becauſe he carried, if not the *firſt*, yet the *ſecond* place in all kind of literature), condemn the ancient poetry as γραώδη μυθολογίαν, *a company of old wives' tales*, which were invented for nothing but to pleaſe ſilly people, and had no real learning or truth at all in them. For this, though he be ſharply cenſured by Strabo in his firſt book, who undertakes to vindicate the geography of Homer from the exceptions of Eratoſthenes, yet himſelf cannot but confeſs that there is a very great mixture of old fables in all their poets, *which is*, ſaith he, *partly to delight the people, and partly to awe them. For the minds of men being always deſirous of novelties, ſuch things do hugely pleaſe the natural humours of weak people; eſpecially if there be ſomething in them that is* θαυμαστὸν καὶ τερατῶδες, *very ſtrange and wonderful, it increaſeth the delight in hearing it;* ὅπερ ἐστὶ τῦ μανθάνειν φίλτρον, *which draws them on to a deſire of hearing more of it. And by this means*, ſaith he, *are children firſt brought on to learning, and all ignorant perſons are kept in awe; nay, and the more learned themſelves* (partly for want of reaſon and judgment, and partly from the remainder of thoſe impreſſions which theſe things made upon them when they were children) *cannot ſhake off that former credulity which they had as to theſe things.* By which diſcourſe of Strabo, though intended wholly by him in vindication of poetic fables, it is plain and evident what great diſſervice hath been done to truth by them, by reaſon they had no other records to preſerve their ancient hiſtory but theſe fabulous writers. And therefore ſuppoſing a mixture of truth and falſehood together,

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together, which Strabo contends for, yet what way ſhould be taken to diſtinguiſh the true from the falſe, when they had no other certain records? And beſides, he himſelf acknowledgeth how hard a matter it is even for wiſe men to excuſs thoſe fabulous narrations out of their minds, which were inſinuated into them by all the advantages which prejudice, cuſtom, and education, could work upon them. Granting then there may be ſome truth at the bottom of their fabulous narrations,

Ὡς δ' ὅτε τὶς χρυσὸν περιχεύεται ἀργύρῳ ἀνὴρ, Homer. Odyſſ. 23. v. 159.

which may be gilded over with ſome pleaſant tales, as himſelf compares it, yet how ſhall thoſe come to know that it is only gilded that never ſaw any pure metal, and did always believe that it was what it ſeemed to be? Had there been any κριτήριον, or touchſtone, to have differenced between the one and the other, there might have been ſome way for a ſeparation of them; but there being none ſuch, we muſt conclude that the fabulous narrations of poets, inſtead of making truth more pleaſant by their fictions, have ſo adulterated it, that we cannot find any credibility at all in their narrations of elder times, where the truth of the ſtory hath had no other way of conveyance but through their fictions.

V.

But though poets may be allowed their liberty for repreſenting things to the greateſt advantage to the palates of their readers, yet we may juſtly expect, when men profeſs to be hiſtorical, they ſhould deliver us nothing but what, upon ſtricteſt examination, may prove undoubted truth. Yet even this were the Greeks far from; for Strabo himſelf confeſſeth of their oldeſt hiſtorians, Καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι δὲ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ φυσικοὶ μυθογράφοι, *their firſt hiſtorians, both of perſons and things, were fabulous.* Diodorus particularly inſtanceth in their oldeſt hiſtorians, as Cadmus Mileſius, Hecatæus, and Hellanicus; and condemns them for fabulouſneſs. Strabo condemns Damaſtes Sigenſis Strabo, l. i. p. 13.

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enſis for vanity and falſehood, and wonders at Eratoſthenes for making uſe of him; yet this man is of great antiquity among them, and his teſtimony uſed by authors of good credit; as Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis, Plutarch, and others. Nay, Pliny profeſſeth to follow him, and ſo he doth Ariſteas Proconneſius in his Arimaſpia, which may render the credit of his hiſtory very ſuſpicious; with whom it was a ſufficient ground of credibility to any ſtory, that he found it in ſome Greek authors. Strabo reckons Damaſtes with Euhemerus Meſſenius and Antiphanes Bergæus; which latter was ſo noted a liar, that from him, as Stephanus tells us, Βεργαΐζειν was uſed as a proverb for *to ſpeak never a word of truth*. Ariſteas Proconneſius lived in the time of Cyrus, and writ a hiſtory of the Arimaſpi, in three books, who ſeems to have been the Sir John Mandevil of Greece, from his ſtories of the Arimaſpi with one eye in their foreheads, and their continually fighting the Gryphens for gold: yet the ſtory was taken upon truſt by Herodotus, Pliny, and many others; though the experience of all who have viſited thoſe northern climates do ſufficiently refute theſe follies. Strabo ſaith of this Ariſteas, that he was ἀνὴρ γόης εἴ τις ἄλλος, *one inferior to none for juggling*; which cenſure was probably occaſioned by the common ſtory of him, that he could let his ſoul out of his body when he pleaſed, and bring it again; yet this juggler did Celſus pitch on to confront with our bleſſed Saviour, as Hierocles did on Apollonius: ſo much have thoſe been to ſeek for reaſon, who have ſought to oppoſe the doctrine of faith.

V. Caſaub. in Strab. l. i. Voſſ de Hiſt. Græc. l. iv. c. 5.

Stephan. in Βίργη.

Strabo, l. xiii. p. 405.

VI. But further: What credit can we give to thoſe hiſtorians who have ſtriven to confute each other, and lay open one another's falſehood to the world? Where was there ever any ſuch diſſonancy in the ſacred hiſtory of Scripture? Doth the writer of one book diſcover the weakneſs of another? Do not all the parts ſo exactly agree, that the moſt probable ſuſpicion

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ſuſpicion could ever fall into the heart of an infidel is, that they were all written by the ſame perſon, which yet the ſeries of times manifeſts to have been impoſſible? But now, if we look into the ancient Greek hiſtorians, we need no other teſtimony than themſelves to take away their credibility. The Genealogies of Heſiod are corrected by Acuſilaus; Acuſilaus is condemned by Hellanicus; Hellanicus accuſed of falſehood by Ephorus, Ephorus by Timæus, Timæus by ſuch who followed him, as Joſephus fully ſhews. Where muſt we then fix our belief? upon all in common? That is the ready way to believe contradictions; for they condemn one another of falſehood. Muſt we believe one, and reject the reſt? But what evidence doth that one give, why he ſhould be credited more than the reſt? And their oldeſt hiſtorians are acknowledged to be moſt fabulous (which is a moſt irrefragable argument againſt the Grecian hiſtory): for our only recourſe for deciding the controverſy among the younger hiſtorians, muſt be to the older: and there we are further to ſeek than ever; for the firſt ages are confeſſed to be poetical, and to have no certainty of truth in them. So that it is impoſſible to find out any undoubted certainty of ancient times among the Greek hiſtorians; which will be yet more evident when we add this, that there are very few extant of thoſe hiſtorians, who did carry the greateſt name for antiquity.

Joſeph. c. Apion. l. i. c. 3.

VII. The higheſt antiquity of the Greek hiſtorians doth not much exceed the time of Cyrus and Cambyſes, as Voſſius hath fully demonſtrated in his learned book, De Hiſtoricis Græcis; and therefore I ſhall ſpare particular enquiries into their ſeveral ages. Only theſe two things will further clear the inſufficiency of the Greek hiſtory, as to an account of ancient times: firſt, that of many of theſe old hiſtorians we have nothing left but their mere names, without any certainty of what they treated. Such are Siſyphus Cous, Corinnus, Eugeon Samius, Deiochus Proconneſius,

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and Italian of Hippys Rheginus; the Telchiniac History of Teleclides? All these are now buried, with many more, in the rubbish of time; and we have nothing but mere skeletons of them left, to tell us that once such persons were, and thought themselves concerned to give the world some account of their being in it. Whereby may be likewise seen the remarkable providence of God concerning the sacred history; which, though of far greater antiquity than any of these, hath survived them all, and is still preserved with us with as much purity and incorruption, as a book passing through so many hands was capable of. But of that in its due place. CHAP. IV.

VIII. But yet if the Greek historians that are yet extant were of more undoubted credit than those that are lost, we might easily bear with our losing some old stories, if we gained some authentic history by it, accomplished in all its parts: but even this we are far from in the Greek history; for the historians themselves do either confess their own ignorance of ancient times, or do most palpably discover it, which was the *third* and last consideration touching the credibility of the Grecian history. That most grave and accurate historian Thucydides, than whom scarce ever any Grecian discovered more an impartial love to the truth in what he writ, doth not only confess, but largely prove the impossibility of an exact account to be given of the times preceding the Peloponnesian war, in the entrance into his history: *For*, saith he, *the matter preceding that time cannot now, through the length of time, be accurately discovered or found out by us.* All that he could find in the ancient state of Greece, was a deal of confusion, unquiet stations, frequent removals, continual piracies, and no settled form of commonwealth. What certain account can be then expected of those times, when a most judicious writer, even of Athens itself, acknowledgeth such a *chaos* in their ancient history? And Plutarch, a later author indeed, but scarce behind any

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IX. But as they are ſo confuſed in their own hiſtory, ſo they are as ignorant and fabulous when they dare venture over their own threſholds, and look abroad into other countries: we certainly owe a great part of the lamentable ignorance of the true original of moſt nations to the pitiful account the Greek authors have given of them; which have had the fortune to be entertained in the world with ſo much eſteem and veneration, that it hath been thought learning enough to be acquainted with the account which they give of nations: which I doubt not hath been the great reaſon ſo many fabulous relations, not only of nations, but perſons, and ſeveral animals never exiſting, have met with ſo much entertainment from the leſs inquiſitive

ſitive world. The Greek writers, it is evident, took up things upon truſt as much as any people in the world did, being a very weak and inconſiderable nation at firſt; and afterwards the knowledge they had was generally borrowed from other nations, which the wiſe men only ſuited to the temper of the Greeks, and ſo made it more fabulous than it was before. As it was certainly the great defect of the natural philoſophy of the Greeks (as it hath been ever ſince in the world) that they were ſo ready to form theories upon ſome principles or hypotheſes which they only received by tradition from others, without fetching their knowledge from the experiments of nature; and to theſe they ſuited all the phenomena of nature, and what was not ſuitable was rejected as monſtrous and anomalous; ſo it was in their hiſtory, wherein they had ſome fabulous hypotheſes they took for granted, without enquiring into the truth and certainty of them; and to theſe they ſuit whatever light they gained, in after-times, of the ſtate of foreign nations, which hath made truth and antiquity wreſtle ſo much with the corruptions which eat into them through the pride and ignorance of the Greeks. Hence they have always ſuited the hiſtory of other nations with the account they give of their own; and where nothing could ſerve out of their own hiſtory to give an account of the original of other nations, they (who were never backward at fictions) have made a founder of them ſuitable to their own language. The truth is, there is nothing in the world uſeful or beneficial to mankind, but they have made ſhift to find the author of it among themſelves. If we enquire after the original of agriculture, we are told of Ceres and Triptolemus; if of paſturage, we are told of an Arcadian Pan; if of wine, we preſently hear of a Liber Pater; if of iron inſtruments, then who but Vulcan; if of muſic, none like to Apollo. If we preſs them then with the hiſtory of other nations, they are as well provided here: if we enquire an account of Europe,

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rope, Asia, or Libya; for the first we are told a fine story of Cadmus's sister; for the second, of Prometheus's mother of that name; and for the third, of a daughter of Epaphus. If we are yet so curious as to know the original of particular countries, then Italy must find its name from a calf of Hercules; because Ἰταλὸς in Greek will signify some such thing; Sardinia and Africa must be from Sardos and Afer, two sons of Hercules; but yet if these will not serve, Hercules shall not want for children to people the world; for we hear of Scythes, Galatas, Lydus, some other sons of his, that gave names to Scythia, Lydia, and Galatia; with the same probability that Media had its name from Medea, and Spain and Lusitania from Pan and Lusus, two companions of Bacchus. If Persia want a founder, they have one Perseus, an Argive, ready for it, if Syria, Babylonia, and Arabia, want reasons of their names, the prodigal Greeks will give Apollo three sons, Syrus, Babylon, and Arabs, rather than they shall be heretical Acephalists. This vanity of theirs was universal, not confined to any place or age; but as any nation or people came into their knowledge, their Gods were not so decrepit but they might father one son more upon them, rather than any nation should be *filia populi*, and want a father. Only the grave Athenians thought scorn to have any farther assigned them; their only ambition was to be accounted *aborigines & genuini terræ*, to be the eldest sons of their *teeming mother the earth*, and to have been born by the same equivocal generation that mice and frogs are, from the impregnated slime of the earth. Are we not like to have a wonderful account of ancient times, from those who could arrogate to themselves so much knowledge from such slender and thin accounts of the originals of people which they gave, and would have the world entertain, with the greatest veneration, upon their naked words? Have we not indeed great reason to hearken to those who did so frequently

frequently discover their affection to fables, and manifest their ignorance whenever they venture upon the history of other nations?

x. The truth is, Herodotus himself (whom Tully calls the *Father of History*, which title he deserves, at least in regard of antiquity, being the oldest of the extant Greek historians) hath stood in need of his compurgators, who yet have not been able to acquit him of fabulousness, but have sought to make good his credit by recrimination, or by making it appear that Herodotus did not fully believe the stories he tells, but took them upon trust himself, and so delivers them to the world. Some impute it to the ingenuity of Herodotus, that he calls his books of history by the name of the Muses, on purpose to tell his readers they must not look for mere history in him, but a mixture of such relations, which, though not true, might yet please and entertain his readers: though others think they were not so inscribed by himself, but the names were given to them by the Greeks, from the admiration his history had among them. However this were, this we are certain, that Herodotus was not first suspected of falsehood in these latter ages of the world, but even among the Greeks themselves there have been found some that would undertake to make good that charge against him. For so Suidas tells us of one Ælius Harpocration, who writ a book on purpose to discover the falsehood of Herodotus, Περὶ τῦ κατεψεῦσθαι τὴν Ἡροδότυ ἱστορίαν. Plutarch's books are well known *of the spite or malignity of Herodotus*; but the occasion of that is sufficiently known likewise, because Herodotus had given no very favourable character of Plutarch's country. Strabo likewise seems to accuse Herodotus much of nugacity, and mixing prodigious fables with his history; but I confess, observing the grounds on which Plutarch insists against Herodotus, I am very prone to think that the ground of the great pique, in some of the Greek writers against Herodotus,

Strabo, l. xvii. p. 563.

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tus, was, that he told too many tales out of ſchool, and had diſcovered too much of the infancy of Greece, and how much the Grecians borrowed of the Egyptian ſuperſtitions: which Plutarch expreſsly ſpeaks of, that Herodotus was too much led aſide, ταῖς Αἰγυπτίων ἀλαζονείαις καὶ μυθολογίαις τὰ σεμνότατα καὶ ἀγνότατα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἱερῶν ἀνατρέπων. Although, therefore, Herodotus may not be much to blame in the things which the Grecians moſt charge him with, yet thoſe who favour him moſt cannot excuſe his palpable miſtakes in ſome things, and ignorance in others. Joſephus thinks he was deceived by the Egyptian prieſts in things relating to the ſtate of their affairs; of which Jos. Scaliger gives many accounts. *Either*, ſaith he, *the perſons who gave him his intelligence were ignorant themſelves, or elſe, like true Egyptians, they were cunning enough, and impoſed upon Herodotus, being a ſtranger, and unacquainted with their artifices; or elſe he did not underſtand his interpreter, or was deceived by him*; or laſtly, *Herodotus might have ſo much of a Grecian in him, as to adulterate the true hiſtory with ſome fables of his own*; wherefore he rather adheres to Manetho than Herodotus as to the Egyptian hiſtory: who yet elſewhere (I will not ſay with what conſtancy to himſelf) vouchſafes him this high *elogium*, that he is *ſcrinium originum Græcarum & Barbararum, auctor à doctis nunquam deponendus.*

Plutarch. de Herod. Mal. p. 857. Ed. Xyl.

Joſeph. c. App. l. i. Scal. Can. Isagog. l. iii.

Idem ad num. Euſ. 1572.

XI. It cannot be denied but a great deal of very uſeful hiſtory may be fetched out of him; yet who can excuſe his ignorance, when he not only denies there is an ocean compaſſing the land, but condemns the geographers for aſſerting it? Unleſs this might be any plea for his ignorance in geography, that he had ſo many great names beſides him guilty of the ſame: witneſs Ariſtotle's ſuſpicion that the Indies ſhould be joined to Europe about the Streights, where they feigned Hercules's Pillars to be: and the Theræans' ignorance where any ſuch place as Libya was, when the Oracle bade them plant a colony there. Would it

Herod. l. ii. c. 23.

it not have been worth one's while to have heard the great noiſe the ſun uſed to make every night when he douſed his head in the ocean, as none of the moſt ignorant Greeks imagined? and to have ſeen the ſun about Hercules's Pillars to be a hundred times bigger than he appeared to them, as they commonly fancied? Was not Alexander, think we, well tutored in his coſmography by his maſter Ariſtotle, when he writ word to his mother, he had found out the head of Nilus in the Eaſt Indies, as Arrian relates the ſtory? No wonder, then, his ſoldiers ſhould miſtake the mountain Paropamiſus, in the Indies, for Caucaſus, near Colchis, when even their learned men thought Colchis the utmoſt boundary of the world on that ſide, as Hercules's Pillars on this. What a lamentable account then were they able to give of the moſt ancient times, who were ſo ignorant of the ſtate of the world in their own time, when learning was in its height in Greece, and frequent diſcoveries daily made of the world, by the wars which were made abroad? Eratoſthenes confeſſeth the Grecians were ignorant of a great part of Aſia, and the northern parts of Europe, before Alexander's expedition; and Strabo confeſſeth as much of the weſtern parts of Europe, till the Roman expeditions thither. Palus Mæotis and Colchis, ſaith he, were not fully known till the time of Mithridates; nor Hyrcania, Bactriana, and Scythia, till the Parthian wars. Eratoſthenes mentions ſome who thought the Arabian ſea to be only a lake. And it further argues their ignorance in geography, that the later geographers always correct the errors of the elder; as Ptolemy doth Marinus, Eratoſthenes thoſe before him, Hipparchus Eratoſthenes; and Strabo not only both them, but Eudoxus, Ephorus, Dicæarchus, Polybius, Poſidonius, and almoſt all that had writ before him. I inſiſt on theſe things, not that I would deſtroy the credibility of any human hiſtory, where the authors are guilty of any miſtakes (for that were to take

Arrian. Hiſt. Alex. l. vi.

Strabo, l. i.

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away the credit of all human hiſtory), but to ſhew how inſufficient thoſe hiſtorians are to give us a certain account of the original of nations, who were ſo unacquainted with the ſtate of thoſe nations which they pretend to give an account of. For where there is wanting divine revelation (which was not pretended by any Greek hiſtorians; and if it had, had been eaſily refuted), there muſt be ſuppoſed a full and exact knowledge of all things pertaining to that which they pretend to give an account of; and if they diſcover apparent defect and inſufficiency (which hath been largely manifeſted as to them in the precedent diſcourſe), we have ground to deny the credibility of thoſe hiſtories upon the account of ſuch defect and inſufficiency. So much then will abundantly ſuffice for the making good the firſt argument againſt the credibility of profane hiſtories, as to the account which they give of ancient times, different from the word of God.

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CHAP. V.

The general Uncertainty of Heathen Chronology.

I. *The Want of Credibility in Heathen Hiſtory further proved, from the Uncertainty and Confuſion in their Accounts of ancient Times. That diſcovered by the uncertain Form of their Years.* II. *An Enquiry into the different Forms of the* Egyptian *Years; the firſt of thirty Days.* III. *The ſecond of four Months; of both Inſtances given in the* Egyptian *Hiſtory.* IV. *Of the* Chaldæan *Accounts, and the firſt Dynaſties mentioned by* Beroſus, *how they may be reduced to Probability.* V. *Of the* Egyptian *Dynaſties of* Manetho. *Reaſons of accounting them fabulous, becauſe not atteſted by any credible Authority, and rejected by the beſt Hiſtorians.* VI. *The Opinion of* Scaliger *and* Voſſius, *concerning their being contemporary, propounded,* VII. *and rejected, with Reaſons againſt it.* VIII. *Of the ancient Diviſion of* Egypt *into* Nomi *or Provinces, and the Number of them, againſt* Voſſius *and* Kircher.

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THE next thing to manifeſt how little there is of credibility in the account of ancient times, reported by the hiſtories of Heathen nations, is the uncertainty, confuſion, and ambiguity in the account they give of thoſe times. If we ſuppoſe them not defective as to their records; if yet we find the account given ſo perplexed, ambiguous, and confuſed, that we can find no certainty of the meaning of it, we have very little reaſon to entertain it with any certain aſſent unto it. Now this will be made evident by theſe things. 1. The uncertainty of their chronology, whereon their whole account depends. 2. The multitude of impoſtures taken from ancient hiſtories. 3. The uncertain meaning

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Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. i. p. 9. Edit. Colon.

among them. Among the Romans was uſed an ὀκταήμερον, which was for the ſake of the *nundinæ*; returning every ninth day. The Mexicans, as Scaliger tells us, reckon all by a τρισκαιδεκαήμερον, *a ſyſtem of thirteen days*. Next to theſe were their months; which were either lunar or ſolar. The lunar were either from the moon's return to the ſame point of the zodiac again, called περίοδος σελήνης, which was leſs than twenty-eight days; but this was of no uſe in civil computations; or elſe from one conjunction of the moon with the ſun to another, which was called σύνοδος σελήνης, or elſe from the firſt phaſis of the moon, the ſecond day after its *coitus*, called φάσις and ἀπόκρουσις σελήνης: ſome, as the Grecians, reckoned their lunar months from the *coitus*, as Scaliger proves out of Vitruvius: others from the *phaſis*, as ſome Eaſtern nations did; as the Jews began their obſervation of the new moons from the firſt *phaſis* or appearance of her after the *coitus*. The ſolar months were either natural, ſuch as were defined by the ſun's paſſage from one ſign of the zodiac to another, or civil, whereby the months were equally divided into thirty days a-piece, as in the Grecian and Egyptian year.

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II. Having thus far ſeen of what the year conſiſts, we now proceed to ſhew that the ancient nations did not obſerve one conſtant certain form of year among them, but had ſeveral in uſe; to which their accounts may be referred. And becauſe the Egyptians are ſuppoſed to have been beſt ſkilled as to the form of the year, according to that of Macrobius, *anni certus modus apud ſolos ſemper Egyptios fuit*, we ſhall particularly demonſtrate the variety of years in uſe among them; by which we ſhall ſee what great uncertainty there is in their accounts of their dynaſties. For, firſt, it is evident that the time of thirty days was, among the ancient Egyptians, accounted a year; for which we have the teſtimony of Plutarch in Numa. Αἰγυπτίοις δὲ μηνιαῖος ἦν ὁ ἐνιαυτὸς, εἶτα τετράμηνος, *the*

Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 12.

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Egyptians had at firſt a year conſiſting of one month, and after of four. So Varro in Lactantius gives an account of the great age of ſome men in ancient times, who are ſuppoſed to have lived a thouſand years;

Lactant. de Origin. l. ii. c. 12. Ed. Oxon.

Ait enim apud Egyptios pro annis menſes haberi, ut non ſolis per 12 ſigna circuitus faciat annum, ſed luna quæ orbem illum ſigniferum 30 dierum ſpatio illuſtrat. It is then evident that this year of thirty days was in uſe among the Egyptians; the only ſcruple is, whether it was uſed in their ſacred accounts or no; and that it was, we have a pregnant teſtimony in Plutarch in the fore-cited place. Speaking of the Egyptians great pretence to antiquity, he gives this account of it, πλῆθος ἀμήχανον ἐτῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς γενεαλογίαις καταφέρουσιν, ἅ τε δὴ τὰς μῆνας εἰς ἐτῶν ἀριθμὸν τεθέμενοι. *They reckon an infinite number of years in their accounts, becauſe they reckon their months inſtead of years.*

According to this computation, it will be no difficult matter to reduce the vaſt accounts of the Egyptian antiquity to ſome proportion, and to reconcile their exorbitant dynaſties with ſobriety and truth, eſpecially as to the account given of them by Diodorus Siculus; for ſo Diodorus gives in their accounts, that the gods and heroes reigned in Egypt for the ſpace of near 18,000 years; and the laſt of them was Orus, the ſon of Iſis. From the reign of men in Egypt he reckons about 9500 years to the time (if we admit of Jacob Cappellus's correction of πεντακοσίων for πεντακισχιλίων, in Diodorus) of his entrance into Egypt, which was in the 180th Olympiad. Now as the aforeſaid learned author obſerves, Diodorus came into Egypt A. M. 3940, V. C. 694; the mortal men then had reigned in Egypt 9500 years, which, taking it for theſe lunar years of thirty days, makes of Julian years 780; the heroes and gods 18,000 months, that is of Julian years 1478. From theſe two ſums together are gathered 2258 years, which, being deducted from the year of the world 3940, falls in the year of the world 1682; about which

Diodor. lib. i.

Hiſt. Sacr. & Exot. A. M. 1682.

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which time Miſraim, who was the great hiſtorical Oſiris of Egypt (ſo called by a light variation of his former name) might be well ſuppoſed to be born; for that was in the year of Noah 630; and ſo Orus might be born, who was the ſon of Oſiris, about the year of the world 1778; between whoſe time and Alexander the Great's conqueſt of Egypt, the Egyptians, as the ſame Diodorus tells us, reckon little leſs than 23,000 years. Now according to this computation, of 30 days for a year, we may reconcile this to truth too; for from 1778 to 3667 of the world, which falls upon the 417th year of Nabonaſſar, there is an interval of 1889 years, which makes of theſe lunar years of 30 days, ſaith Cappellus, 22,996 and 15 days; which comes very near, if not altogether, up to the Egyptian computation. So when the Egyptians, according to Diodorus, make no leſs than 10,000 years diſtance between their Hercules and Hercules Bœotius, the ſon of Alcmena, it muſt be underſtood of theſe lunar years; for granting what the Egyptians ſay, that Hercules Bœotius lived but one generation before the Trojan war, and ſo his time to fall out about 2783, reckoning now backward from thence, and deducting from that year of the world 10,000 months of 30 days, or Julian years 831 and 130 days, the time of the Egyptian Hercules will fall about the firſt year of the world 1962; about which time we may well ſuppoſe him to live or die. And according to this computation we are to underſtand what the Egyptians told Herodotus, that, from their firſt king or prieſt of Vulcan, till the time of Sethos (in whoſe time Sennacherib attempted the conqueſt of Egypt), there had been paſſed 341 *generations*, and as many kings and high-prieſts, and 11,340 years, reckoning three generations to make up a century. But now, if we underſtand this prodigious computation according to this form of years, we may ſuſpect the Egyptians of an intention to deceive Herodotus and the credulous

CHAP. V.

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Greeks, but yet not impeach them of direct falſehood, it being thus reconcileable to truth: for according to this account 100 years make 3000 days, and a generation 1000; ſo many days the kings or prieſts of Vulcan may be allowed to reign; ſo 340 generations, of 1000 days a-piece, make up 340,000 days; to which, if we add the 200 days which Sethos had now reigned upon Sennacherib's invaſion, we have 340,200 days, which makes up of theſe years, of 30 days a-piece, 11,340, which is the number aſſigned by Herodotus. Jacobus Cappellus thinks the *epocha* from whence theſe years are to be reckoned, is from A. M. 2350, when Mephres began to reign in Egypt; from whence if we number theſe 340,200 days, or 11,340 monthly years, which make up of Julian years 931 and 152 days, the number falls A. M. 3282; about which time in probability Sennacherib invaded Egypt. Thus we ſee, by making uſe of thoſe lunar years, that it is poſſible to reconcile ſome of the Egyptian extravagant accounts to ſome probability and conſiſtency with truth: but however we owe very little thanks to the Egyptians for it, who deliver theſe things in groſs, without telling us which years they mean, and thereby evidence their intent to deceive all who have ſo little wit as to be deceived by them.

Cappell. Hiſt. Sacr. & Exot. A. M. 3282.

III. The next kind and form of the Egyptian year, was that which conſiſted of four equal months, amounting to 120 days: the uſe of this kind of year among them is atteſted by Plutarch in the forecited place, and by Diodorus, who gives an account of this kind of year among the Egyptians. Solinus ſeems to mention this as the only year in requeſt among the Egyptians: and ſo St. Auguſtin, *perhibentur Egyptii quondam tam breves annos habuiſſe ut quaternis menſibus finiverentur.* This renders then the Egyptian accounts yet more uncertain, and only leaves us to gueſs, with the greateſt probability of reaſon, what form of year was meant by them in their computations.

Diod. l. i. c. 26. Solin. Polyhiſt. c. 3. Auguſt. de Civ Dei, l. xii. c. 10.

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putations. So when Diodorus ſpeaks ſo much in favour of the old Egyptian kings and laws, and produceth this from the Egyptian prieſts as the beſt evidence of the excellent temper of their government, that they had kings of their own nation for the ſpace of 4700 years, till the time of Cambyſes' inroad into Egypt, which was in the third year of the 63d Olympiad. Now beſides the apparent contradiction of theſe accounts to the other already explained, if we take them in groſs, as the Egyptians give them, it is evident this can be no otherwiſe true, than by taking theſe accounts in that form of years now mentioned by us. For theſe 4700 years, taking them for 120 days a-piece, make up of Julian years 1544; which being deducted from the year of the world 3475, which was the time when Cambyſes invaded Egypt, the remainder is A. M. 1931; about which time we may fix the death of Orus, from whom their proper kings commenced. And of theſe years, Voſſius tells us, we are to underſtand what they report of the long lives of their ancient kings, when they attribute to each of them the ſpace of 300 years: as when they attribute 1000 and more to their oldeſt kings, we are to underſtand them of ſimple lunar years of 30 days, by which theſe *gigantic* meaſures of the term of their lives may, without the help of Procruſtes, be cut ſhort, according to the proportion of men's ordinary age in thoſe eldeſt times. So when Diodorus reckons from the death of Proteus to his own time, A. M. 3940, 3400 years, it muſt be underſtood of theſe years of four equal months; for ſo thoſe 3400 years make up of Julian years 1117; which being deduced from 3940, the remainder is 2823, about which year of the world Proteus may be ſuppoſed to live; which was about the time of the Judges in Iſrael.

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Diod l. i.

Voſſius de Idol. l. i. c. 28.

IV. Neither was this only the Egyptians way, but in probability the ancient Chaldæans obſerved the ſame; which may be a ground likewiſe of thoſe unmeaſurable

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able accounts among them in their firſt Dynaſties, as is evident in the Fragments of Abydenus and Apollodorus out of Beroſus, where the times of their firſt kings are reckoned not by years, but Σάροι, Νεῖροι, and Σῶσοι; now according to them every Σάρος contained 3600 years, Νεῖρος 600, Σῶσος 60. Now who can imagine that Alorus, and the ten kings from him to Xiſuthrus, ſhould reign 120 Sari, as their computation is; which, reckoning for every Saros 3600 years, makes up 432,000 years? A very fair ſum for the Chaldæan Dynaſties before the time of Xiſuthrus, by whom in probability Noah was by them underſtood. There have been only two ways thought on of dealing with theſe computations; either rejecting them as wholly fabulous, and founded on no evidence or records of hiſtory, as we have ſeen already; only they might retain (being ſo near the place of the ſettlement of Noah and his poſterity after the flood) the memory not only of the flood (of which it is evident they had ſeveral remainders preſerved in their traditions), but likewiſe of the ages of men preceding the flood, wherein they were right, reckoning from Alorus the Firſt to Xiſuthrus, i. e. from Adam to Noah, ten generations; but as to the names of thoſe ten perſons, and the times they lived in, being wholly ignorant through the unfaithfulneſs of tradition, they took their liberty not only of coining names, but of ſetting what age to them they pleaſed themſelves. And to this purpoſe Scaliger obſerves that ſome of their firſt kings are reckoned before the flood, which, ſaith he, is denied by Georgius Syncellus without any ſhew of reaſon. Thus far then we may admit of the Chaldæan Dynaſties as to ſome part of the tradition, but rejecting their names and computations as fabulous. The other way of explaining theſe Dynaſties, is by the ſeveral ways of computation among them: for the learned monks, Panodorus and Anianus, underſtand thoſe vaſt ſums, not of years, but days, and ſo make a Saros to contain

Scal. Not. in Gr. Euſeb. p. 406.

tain 120 months of thirty days a-piece; which, ſaith Scaliger, make ten Chaldee years, and a Nirus twenty equal months, and a Soſos two: according to which computation the 100 Sari make but 1200 years. But this computation of theirs is rejected by Georgius Syncellus, becauſe he ſuppoſeth Euſebius ſo well verſed in theſe things, that he would never have ſet them down for years, if the Chaldæans had not underſtood them ſo, and therefore he would not trouble himſelf in reducing fables to true hiſtory, as he expreſſeth it: whoſe words are at large produced by Scaliger in the fore-cited place. And it will appear more neceſſary to reject thoſe Chaldæan computations, if we take the ſums of their years in the ſenſe which Salmaſius gives of them in the preface to his book *De Annis Climactericis* (from whom Pyrerius, the author of the Præadamites, hath borrowed moſt of his arguments as to theſe things). According to him, then, every Σάρος contained no leſs than 6000 years, as the Toman, among the Perſians, contained 10,000: but becauſe that learned man hath only given us his *reperi ſcriptum*, without any certain foundation for ſo large an account of thoſe ſums, we ſhall take them in as favourable a ſenſe as we can. In order to which, a very learned man of our own hath found a third interpretation of the Σάρος, in the Chaldee accounts, from a correction of Suidas, by the MS. in the Vatican library; according to which he thus reads the words, Οἱ γὰρ ρκ' σάροι ποιοῦσιν ἐνιαυτὸς βσκβ' κατὰ τὴν Χαλδαίων ψῆφον, εἴπερ ὁ σάρος ποιεῖ μῆνας Σεληνιακῶν σκβ', οἵοι γίνονται ιή ἐνιαυτοὶ καὶ μῆνες ἕξ: *And ſo the ſenſe*, ſaith he, *is clear*; Σάρος, *according to the Chaldee account, comprehends* 222 *months, which come to eighteen years and ſix months*; *therefore* 120 Σάροι *make* 2220 *years*; *and therefore* (he adds) *for* βσκβ', *I read, leaving out the laſt* β, βσκ'. Now according to this ſenſe of 120 Sari to comprehend the ſum of 2220 years, it will be no difficult matter to reduce the fragment of Beroſus, concerning the ten kings before the flood,

D. Pearſon on the Creed. p. 69. vol. ii. Edit. Oxon.

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BOOK I. flood, reigning 120 Sari, to ſome degree of probability. As to which I ſhall only ſuppoſe theſe two things: Firſt, that the ancient Chaldæans had preſerved among them ſome tradition of the number of the chief perſons before the flood; for we find them exactly agreeing with the Scriptures as to the number, though differing as to the names of them, which may be ſeen in the fragments of Africanus, preſerved in Euſebius's Greek *Chronica*. Secondly, that Beroſus, from whom Apollodorus and Alexander Polyhiſtor deliver theſe computations, might, as to the account of the times of thoſe perſons, follow the tranſlation of the Septuagint. For I have already made it evident that Beroſus did not publiſh his hiſtory till after the Septuagint was abroad: now according to the computation of the Septuagint of the ages before the flood, theſe 120 Sari of the ten kings will not much diſagree from it: for theſe make 2220 years of theſe ten perſons, and the Septuagint in all make 2242; ſo that if inſtead of βσκβ' in Suidas, we only read it βσμβ', we have the exact computation of the Septuagint in theſe 120 Sari: but of this let the learned judge.

Euſeb. p. 4.

V. We now come to the Egyptian Dynaſties of Manetho, as to which, I doubt, we muſt be fain to take the ſame courſe that Euſebius did with the Chaldæan, μὴ συμβιβάζειν τὸ ψεῦδος τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, *not to trouble ourſelves overmuch in ſeeking to reconcile fables to truth.* Great pains is taken by ſome very learned men to reduce the diſorderly Dynaſties of Manetho to ſome probable account; but I muſt confeſs, upon an impartial examination of them, that I think they have ſtriven, if not to make an Ethiopian white, yet an Egyptian to ſpeak truth concerning his own country; which are almoſt of an equal impoſſibility. Joſeph Scaliger, who firſt in this latter age of the world produced them into the light out of Georgius Syncellus, hath a more favourable opinion of them, than of the Egyptian hiſtory of Herodotus, Diodorus, and others;

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others; but upon what account I cannot imagine. Is it becauſe four Dynaſties, according to his own computation, exceed the creation of the world according to the true account? for which he is fain to make uſe of his *tempus prolepticum* and Julian period, which reacheth 764 years beyond the age of the world, and was invented by him from the multiplication of the great *cycle* into the *indiction*, i. e. of 532 into 15. Or is it becauſe, forſooth, Manetho hath digeſted all into better order, and reckoned up the ſeveral Dynaſties which lay confuſed in other authors? But this only ſhews him a more cunning impoſtor, who ſaw the former accounts, given by others, would not ſerve the turn, and therefore pretends to more exactneſs and diligence, that he might more eaſily deceive his readers. But ſetting aſide thoſe things which have been ſaid already concerning Manetho, I have theſe things which make me reject his Dynaſties as fabulous: Firſt, the vaſt difference between Manetho's accounts, and all others who have written the Egyptian hiſtory, in the order and names of Dynaſties. Where do we ever read of the ſeveral Dynaſties of the Thinites, Memphites, Soites, Dioſpolitans, and many others, but in himſelf? It is very ſtrange that neither Herodotus, nor Eratoſthenes, nor Diodorus, who have all written a ſucceſſion of the Egyptian kings, ſhould neither by their own induſtry, nor by all the intereſt they had in Egypt, get any knowledge of theſe methodically digeſted Dynaſties. Beſides, had there been any hiſtorical certainty in theſe Dynaſties of Manetho, whence comes it to paſs that they ſhould be ſo ſilently paſſed over by thoſe who were Egyptian prieſts themſelves, and undertook to write the hiſtory of Egypt? Such were Chæremon, who was an Ἱερογραμματεὺς *a ſacred ſcribe*, and Ptolemæus Mendeſius, who was an Egyptian prieſt, as Euſebius tells us, and comprehended the hiſtory of Egypt in three books. Now had this hiſtory been ſo authentical as is pretended, whence come

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come so many and great contradictions between them? insomuch that Josephus saith, *If that which they report were true, it were impossible they should so much differ; but they labour in the invention of lies, and write neither agreeably to the truth, nor to one another.* So that it is next to a miracle almost to see how prodigiously fond of these Dynasties Kircher is, and what pains he hath taken to no purpose about them; *Scio multos esse*, saith he, *qui hujusmodi Dynastias meras nugas & commenta putant.* Very true: but why is not he of the same mind too? He confesseth himself to have been so once; but since he hath conversed more with the Oriental traditions, he hath found them not to be so fabulous as many make them. It seems, then, the *basis* of the Egyptian Dynasties, as well before the flood as after, must lie in this Oriental tradition; a thing which some, to shew their great skill in those Eastern languages, are grown very fond of. But as far as I can yet see, they sail to Ophir, not for *gold*, but *peacocks*: and the next legend the world hath, should be called Legenda Orientalis. For can any thing be more irrational, absurd, and fabulous, than those Arabic traditions which that author scrapes as much for, as Esop's cock did on the dunghill? But there is no jewel to be found among them, unless we should take those fifteen hard names of men for such, which by the Arabic writers are said to have succeeded each other in Egypt before the flood, viz. Nacraus, Nathras, Mesram, Henoah, Arjak, Hasilim, Husal, Tatrasan, Sarkak, Schaluk, Surith (who they say built the pyramids), Hugith, Manaus, Aphrus, Malinus, Abn Ama Pharaun, in whose time they say the flood came. But should we be so little befriended by reason as to grant all this, what advantage will this be to Manetho, who speaks not of kings, but whole Dynasties? So that it still appears these Dynasties are fabulous, not being attested by any credible witnesses. Secondly, All those who profess to follow Manetho,

Joseph. c. App. l. i. c. 33.

Kircher. Oed. Egyp. to. i. synt. i. c. 9.

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Manetho, differ ſtrangely from one another; as Joſephus, Africanus, Euſebius, George the Syncellus of the patriarch Taraſius: and Scaliger, who hath taken ſo much pains in digeſting of them, yet he is condemned by others ſince; and Iſaac Voſſius gives a particular caution to his reader, in his *Dynaſtiis compingendis nequaquam eſſe ſequendum ordinem & calculum Scaligeri.* What ſhould be the reaſon of this diverſity, but that they thought them not ſo authentic, but they might cut off, alter, and tranſpoſe, as they ſaw occaſion? which is moſt plain and evident in Euſebius, who makes no difficulty of cutting off one whole Dynaſty, and dividing another into two, only to reconcile the diſtance between Thuoris, the Egyptian king, and Teutamus, the Aſſyrian emperor, and the deſtruction of Troy; and therefore leaves out four Aſſyrian kings, and a whole Dynaſty of the Egyptians, to make a *ſynchroniſm* between thoſe three.

CHAP. V.

Iſ. Voſſius de ætate Mundi, c. 10.

VI. But yet there hath been ſomething very fairly offered to the world to clear the truth, if not Manetho, in order to his Dynaſties, viz. that the ſubtle Egyptian, to enhance the antiquity of his own country, did take implicit years for ſolid, and place thoſe in a ſucceſſion which were contemporary one with another. This indeed is a very compendious way to advance a great ſum of years with a very little charge: wherein he hath done, ſaith Cappellus, as if a Spaniard in the Indies ſhould glory of the antiquity of the Dynaſties of Spain, and ſhould attribute to the earls of Barcelona 337 years, to the kings of Arragon 498, to the kings of Portugal 418, to the kings of Leon 545, of Caſtile 800 years; and yet all theſe Dynaſties riſe from the year of our Lord 717, when the Saracens firſt entered Spain. There are very few nations but will go near to vie antiquity with the Egyptians, if they may thus be allowed to reckon ſucceſſively all thoſe petty royalties which anciently were in moſt nations; as might be particularly inſtanced

Cappell. Hiſt. Sacr. & Exot. A.M. 3307.

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ſtanced in moſt great empires, that they gradually riſe from the ſubduing and incorporating of thoſe petty royalties into which the ſeveral nations were cantonized before. And there ſeems to be very ſtrong ground of ſuſpicion that ſome ſuch thing was deſigned by Manetho, from the 32d Dynaſty, which is of the Dioſpolitan Thebans; for this Dynaſty is ſaid to begin from the tenth year of the 15th Dynaſty of the Phœnician paſtors in the time of Saïtes: now, which is moſt obſervable, he that begins this Dynaſty is of the very ſame name with him who begins the very firſt Dynaſty of Manetho, who is Menes, and ſo likewiſe his ſon Athothis is the ſame in both, which hath made many think, becauſe Menes is reckoned firſt not only in both theſe, but in Diodorus, Eratoſthenes, and others, that this Menes was he who firſt began the Kingdom of Egypt, after whoſe time it was divided into ſeveral Dynaſties: which makes Scaliger ſay, *Illa vetuſtiſſima regna fuerunt inſtar latrociniorum; ubi vis, non lex aut ſucceſſio aut ſuffragia populi reges in ſolio regni collocabant.* This opinion of the co-exiſtence of theſe Dynaſties is much embraced by Voſſius, both father and ſon; and by the father made uſe of to juſtify Scaliger from calumniators, who made as though Scaliger did in effect overthrow the authority of the Scriptures, by mentioning with ſome applauſe the Dynaſties of Manetho.

Scalig. can. Iſag. l. iii.

Ger. Voſſ. Idol. l. i. c. 28. If. Voſſ. de æt. mund. c. 10.

VII. But to this opinion, how plauſible ſoever it ſeems, I offer theſe exceptions. Firſt, As to that Menes who is ſuppoſed to be the firſt founder of the Egyptian kingdom, after whoſe death it is ſuppoſed that Egypt was divided into all theſe Dynaſties, I demand who this Menes was: Was he the ſame with him whom the Scripture calls Miſraim, who was the firſt planter of Egypt? This is not probable; for in all probability his name muſt be ſought among the Gods, and not the mortals that reigned. If we ſuppoſe him to be any other after him, it will be hard giving

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giving an account how he came to have the whole power of Egypt in his hands, and ſo ſoon after him it ſhould be divided: for kingdoms are oft-times made up of thoſe petty royalties before; but it will be very hard finding inſtances of one perſon's enjoying the whole power, and ſo many Dynaſties to ariſe after his deceaſe, and to continue coexiſtent in peace and full power ſo long as theſe ſeveral Dynaſties are ſuppoſed to do. Beſides, is it not very ſtrange that no hiſtorian ſhould mention ſuch a former diſtribution of ſeveral principalities ſo anciently in Egypt? But that which to me utterly overthrows the coexiſtence of theſe Dynaſties in Egypt, is, by comparing with them what we find in Scripture of greateſt antiquity concerning the kingdom of Egypt; which I cannot but wonder that none of thoſe learned men ſhould take notice of. When the Egyptian kingdom was firſt founded, it is not here a place to enquire; but it is evident that, in Abraham's time, there was a Pharaoh, king of Egypt (whom Archbiſhop Uſher thinks to have been Apophis); not Abimelech, the firſt king of Egypt, as Conſtantinus Manaſſes reports in his Annals (by a ridiculous miſtake of the king of Gerar for the king of Egypt). This Pharaoh was then certainly king of all the land of Egypt, which ſtill in Scripture is called the Land of Miſraim, from the firſt planter of it: and this was of very great antiquity; and therefore Funccius (though improbably) thinks this Pharaoh to have been Oſiris; and Rivet thinks Miſraim might have been alive till that time. Here then we find no Dynaſties coexiſting, but one kingdom under one king. If we deſcend ſomewhat lower, to the times of Jacob and Joſeph, the evidence is ſo undoubted of Egypt's being an entire kingdom under one king, that he may have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect the eyes either of his body or his mind that diſtruſts it. For what more evident than that Pharaoh, who preferred Joſeph, was *king of all the land of Egypt? Were not the* Gen. xii.

BOOK I. *ſeven years of famine over all the land of Egypt?* Gen. xli. 55. *Was not Joſeph ſet by Pharaoh over all the land of Egypt?* Gen. xli. 41, 43, 45. *And did not Joſeph go over all the land of Egypt to gather corn?* Gen. xli. 46. *Nay, did he not buy all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh?* Gen. xlvii. 20. Can there poſſibly be given any fuller evidences of an entire kingdom than theſe are, that Egypt was ſuch then? Afterwards we read of one king after another in Egypt for the ſpace of nigh two hundred years, during the children of Iſrael's ſlavery in Egypt; and was not he, think we, king over all Egypt, in whoſe time the children of Iſrael went out thence? And in all the following hiſtory of Scripture, is there not mention made of Egypt ſtill as an entire kingdom, and of one king over it? Where then is there any place for theſe contemporary Dynaſties in Egypt? Nowhere, that I know of, but in the fancies of ſome learned men.

VIII. Indeed there is one place that ſeems to give ſome countenance to this opinion; but it is in far later times than the firſt Dynaſties of Manetho are ſuppoſed to be in, which is in Iſai. xix. 2. where God ſaith, *He would ſet the Egyptians againſt the Egyptians, and they ſhall fight every one againſt his brother, city againſt city, and kingdom againſt kingdom.* Where it ſeems that there were ſeveral kingdoms then exiſtent among the Egyptians; but the Septuagint very well renders it νομὸς ἐπὶ νομόν. Now νομὸς among the Egyptians, as Epiphanius and others tell us, notes τὴν ἑκάστης πόλεως περιοικίδα ἤτοι περίχωρον, *the precincts of every great city*, ſuch as our counties are; and therefore Pliny renders νομοὶ by *præfecturæ*. Theſe were the ſeveral provinces of Egypt, of which there were thirty-ſix in Egypt, ten in Thebais, ten in Delta, the other ſixteen in the midland parts; ſo that by kingdom againſt kingdom, no more is meant than one province being ſet againſt another. Iſaac Voſſius thinks the number of the ancient Nomi was twelve, and that over every one of theſe was a peculiar king; and that this

this number may be gathered from the Dynasties of Manetho, setting aside the Dynasties of the Persians, Ethiopians, and Phœnicians, viz. the Thinites, Memphites, Elephantines, Heracleopolitans, Diospolitan Thebans, the Lesser Diospolitans, Xoites, Tanites, Bubastites, Saïtes, Mendesians, and Sebennytes; and so that Egypt was anciently a Dodecarchy, as England in the Saxons time was a Heptarchy. But as it already appears there could be anciently no such Dodecarchy in Egypt, so it is likewise evident that this distribution of Egypt into Nomi is a later thing; and by most writers is attributed to Sesoosis or Sesostris, whom Josephus supposed to be Sesac, king of Egypt, contemporary with Rehoboam. Indeed if we believe Gelaldinus, the Arabic historian, cited by Kircher, the most ancient distribution of Egypt was into four parts. Misraim held one part to himself, and gave his son Copt another, Esmun a third, and Atrib a fourth part; which division the same author affirms to have continued till the time of Joseph, who made a new distribution of the whole land: after him Sesostris divided the whole into thirty several Nomi; so Kircher will needs have it, that of the three several parts of Egypt, each might have for some mystical signification its ten Nomi; of which every one had its distinct and peculiar God it worshipped, and a particular palace in the Labyrinth, and a peculiar Sanhedrin, or court of justice, belonging to it. But it evidently appears by that vain-glorious Oedipus, that it is a far easier matter to make new mysteries than to interpret old ones; which as it might be easily discovered in the main foundations whereon that structure stands, so we have some evidence of it in our first entrance into it, in this part of the Chorography of Egypt. For from whence had he this exact division of Egypt into thirty Nomi; ten of which belonged to the Upper Egypt, or Thebais, ten to Delta, or the Lower Egypt, and the ten remaining to the midland coun-

Vide Boch. Geogr. p. 1. l. iv. c. 24. Kircher Oedip. Egypt. to. 1. Syntag. 1. c. 4.

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try? Hath he this from Ptolemy, whoſe ſcheme of the ſeveral Nomi he publiſheth? No; Ptolemy and Pliny, by his own confeſſion afterwards, add many other to theſe, as Omphile, Phanturites, Tanites, Phatnites, Neut, Heptanomos, &c. Hath he it from Strabo, whoſe authority he cites for it? No ſuch matter; for Strabo ſaith expreſsly, that Thebais had ten Nomi, Delta ten, and the midland ſixteen; only ſome are of opinion, ſaith he, that there were as many Nomi as palaces in the Labyrinth, which were toward thirty; but yet the number is uncertain ſtill. We ſee by this how ominous it is for an Oedipus to ſtumble at the threſhold, and how eaſy a matter it is to interpret myſteries, if we may have the making of them. We ſee then no evidence at all for theſe contemporary Dynaſties of Manetho; which yet if we ſhould grant, would be a further argument of the uncertainty of Heathen chronology, when among them implicit years are given out to the world for ſolid; ſo that which way ſoever Manetho's Dynaſties be taken, they will prove the thing in hand, whether we ſuppoſe them at leaſt moſt part fabulous, or ſhould grant he had taken thoſe in ſucceſſion to each other which were coexiſtent with one another.

IV. Kircher Oedip. Egypt. to. 1. Synt. 1. c. 2. p. 7. Strab. l. xii. p. 541.

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CHAP. VI.

The uncertain Epochas of Heathen Chronology.

I. *An Account of the Defect of Chronology in the eldeſt Times. Of the ſolar Year among the Egyptians; the Original of the Epacts; the Antiquity of Intercalation among them. Of the ſeveral Canicular Years; the Difference between Scaliger and Petavius conſidered. The certain Epochas of the Egyptian Hiſtory no older than Nabonaſſar.* II. *Of the Grecian Accounts. The Fabulouſneſs of the heroical Age of Greece.* III. *Of the ancient Grecian Kingdoms. The Beginning of the Olympiads.* IV. *The uncertain Origins of the Weſtern Nations. Of the Latin Dynaſties. The different Palilia of Rome. The uncertain Reckoning* ab Urbe condita. V. *Of Impoſtures as to ancient Hiſtories. Of Annius,* VI. *Inghiramius, and others.* VII. *Of the Characters uſed by Heathen Prieſts.* VIII. *No ſacred Characters among the Jews.* IX. *The Partiality and Inconſiſtency of Heathen Hiſtories with each other. From all which the Want of Credibility in them as to an Account of ancient Times is clearly demonſtrated.*

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THE next thing to evidence the uncertainty of the Heathen chronology, is the want of certain Parapegmata, or ſome fixed periods of time, according to which the account of times muſt be made. For if there be no certain Epochas by which to reckon the ſucceſſion of ages, the diſtance of intervals, and all intervening accidents, we muſt of neceſſity fluctuate in continual uncertainties, and have no ſure foundation to bottom any account of ancient times upon. The great reaſon of this defect is the little care which thoſe who lived in the eldeſt times had to preſerve the memory of any ancient tradition among

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themſelves, or to convey it to poſterity in ſuch a way as might be leaſt liable to impoſture. Of all kinds of learning, Chronology was the moſt rude in eldeſt times; and yet that is well called by Scaliger, *the life and ſoul of hiſtory*, without which hiſtory is but a confuſed lump, a mere mola, an indigeſted piece of fleſh, without life or form. The ancient accounts of the world were merely from year to year; and that with abundance of obſcurity, uncertainty, and variety: ſometimes going by the courſe of the moon; and therein they were as mutable as the moon herſelf how to conform the year regularly to her motion; and it was yet greater difficulty to regulate it by the courſe of the ſun, and to make the accounts of the ſun and moon meet. There was ſo much perplexity and confuſion about the ordering of a ſingle year, and ſo long in moſt nations before they could bring it into any order, that we are not to expect any fixed periods by which to find out the ſucceſſion of ages among them. Among the Egyptians, who are ſuppoſed moſt ſkilful in the account of the year, it was a long time before they found out any certain courſe of it. It is agreed by moſt, that when the Egyptian prieſts had found out the form of the year by the courſe of the ſun (which is attributed by Diodorus to the Heliopolitan prieſts), yet the year in common uſe was only of 360 days, which in any great period of years muſt needs cauſe a monſtrous confuſion, by reaſon that their months muſt of neceſſity by degrees change their place; ſo that in the great canicular year of 730 Thoyth, which was the beginning of the ſummer ſolſtice in the entrance into that period, would be removed into the midſt of winter; from whence aroſe that Egyptian fable in Herodotus, that in the time of their eldeſt kings the ſun had twice changed his riſing and ſetting; which was only cauſed by the variation of their months, and not by any alteration in the courſe of the ſun: which defect the Egyptian prieſts at laſt obſerving, ſaw

Diodor. l. i. c. 50.

Herod. Euterp. c. 142. Vide Scaliger. de Emend. Temp. l. iii. p. 195.

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saw a necessity of adding five days to the end of the year, which thence were called ἐπαγόμεναι, which implies they were not anciently in use among them, being afterwards added to make up the course of the year: which the Egyptians give an account of, as Plutarch tells us, under this fable. *Mercury being once at dice with the moon, he got from her the 72d part of the year, which he after added to the 360 days which were anciently the days of the year, which they called* ἐπαγόμενας, *and therein celebrated the festivals of their Gods.* Thence the names of the several ἐπαγόμεναι were taken from the Gods. The first was called Ὀσίρις, it being celebrated in honour of him; the second, Ἀρωήρις, by which Scaliger understands Anubis, but Vossius, more probably, the senior Orus; the third to Typho; the fourth to Isis; the fifth to Nephtha, the wife of Typho, and sister to Isis. This course of the year Scaliger thinks that the Egyptians represented by the serpent called Νεισὶ, being described in a round circle biting some part of his tail in his mouth; whereby, saith he, they would have it understood that the form of the year was not perfect without that adjection of five days to the end of the year; for to this day, saith he, the Coptites and ancient Egyptians call the end of the year Νεισί. It seems that afterwards they understood likewise the necessity of intercalation of a day every fourth year, for the sake of the redundant quadrant each year above 365 days; which course of four years they called their Canicular year, because they observed its defect in that time one whole day from the rising of the dog-star: and besides that they called it Ἡλιακὸν ἔτος, and Ἔτος θεᾶ, *& lustrum Sothiacum*, from Σῶθις the dog-star: but Censorinus denies any use of intercalation among the Egyptians in their civil year, although their sacred and hieroglyphical years might admit of it. And upon this ground, I suppose, the controversy between those two learned persons, Scaliger and Petavius, concerning the antiquity of intercalation

Plutarch. de Iside & Oside, c. 12. Edit. Oxon.

Voss. de Idol. l. i. c. 28.

Censorin. de die Nat. c. 18.

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tercalation among the Egyptians, may be reconciled. For on the one ſide it is apparent that the ordinary or civil year did want intercalation, by this teſtimony of Cenſorinus; *Eorum annus civilis ſolos habet dies* 365 *ſine ullo intercalari*; *itaque quadriennium apud eos uno circiter die minus eſt quam naturale quadriennium*; and thence, ſaith he, it comes to paſs, that in 1461 years, which was the great Heliacal year, it returns to the ſame beginning; for then the dog-ſtar ariſeth again upon the firſt day of the month Thoyth, as it did at the beginning of this great Canicular year; and that this kind of civil year did continue among them in the time of Cenſorinus (which was of the Dionyſian account 238) appears by this, that he ſaith in the year wherein he wrote his book, the new moon of Thoyth was before the ſeventh day of the calends of July, whereas a hundred years before, it was before the twelfth of the calends of Auguſt; whence it is evident that the Julian year, whatever ſome learned men pretend to the contrary, was not in ordinary uſe among the Egyptians in that time; and that Soſigenes, when he corrected the Roman account, and brought in the form of the Julian year, did not take his pattern from the Egyptian year, but from the Grecians of Alexandria, who did make uſe of the quadrant added to the 365 years, which the Egyptians did not, as appears further by the golden circle in the monument of Oſimanduas (which Diodorus ſpeaks of out of Hecatæus Mileſius), which was of 365 cubits compaſs, and divided into ſo many ſegments for every day, with the obſervations of the riſing and ſetting of the ſeveral ſtars, and the effects portended by them. And the reaſon why this year continued in civil uſe among the Egyptians, is well aſſigned by Geminus, that the Egyptians, according to a ſuperſtitious obſervation they had, would needs have their feſtivals run through every day in the year. But now on the other ſide it is as evident that, by continual obſervation, the wiſeſt of the Egyptian

V. Petav. de Doctr. Temp. l. iii. c. 2.

Kircher Oed. Egypt. To. 3. Claſſ. 7. c. 2.

Diod. l. i. c. 49.

Geminus de Sphæra, c. 6.

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Egyptian prieſts did diſcern the neceſſity of intercalation, and that there wanted ſix hours in every year to make it complete, which every four years would make the intercalation of a day neceſſary. So much by Diodorus is affirmed of the Theban prieſts, who were the beſt aſtronomers; and by Strabo both of the Theban and Heliopolitan; and ſo likewiſe Horapollo, whoſe work was to interpret the more abſtruſe learning of the Egyptian prieſts. *When* (ſaith he) *the Egyptians would expreſs a year, they name a quadrant, becauſe from one riſing of the ſtar Sothis to another, the fourth part of a day is added, ſo that the year conſiſts of* 365 *days* (and a quadrant muſt be added, becauſe of the antecedents and conſequents); therefore every fourth year they reckon a ſupernumerary day. How unjuſtly Petavius hath charged Scaliger with falſehood in reference to this teſtimony of Horapollo, merely becauſe the citation did not appear in that chapter mentioned by Scaliger in the book which Petavius uſed, hath been already obſerved by learned men. Whereupon Voſſius condemns Petavius of ſtrange incogitancy, becauſe in three editions mentioned by him Scaliger's citation was right: but Conringius hath ſince pleaded in behalf of Petavius, that he might make uſe of the edition of Cauſinus diſtinct from the other three; whereby we ſee how ſmall a matter will beget a feud between learned men, eſpecially where prejudice hath lodged before; as is too evident in Petavius's rough dealing, on all occaſions, with that very deſerving perſon Joſeph Scaliger. But to return. From hence, by degrees, the Egyptians proceeded to make greater periods of years (as Eudoxus carried his Octaeteris into Greece from the Canicular year of the Egyptians): they framed from this a greater Canicular year, which had as many years as a Julian hath days; and laſtly, the greateſt Canicular year, which comprehended four of the greater, and conſiſted of a period of 1461 years. But thus we ſee that the great periods of years

Diodor. l. i. c. 50. Strab. l. xvii. p. 541. Horapollo Hieroglyp. l. i. c. 5.

Voſſ. de Idol. l. i. c. 28.

Conring. de Hermet. Med. c. 12.

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BOOK I. years among them riſe gradually, as they grow more ſkilful in the underſtanding the nature of the year; and that they had anciently no certain periods to govern themſelves by in their computation of ancient times. Nay the Egyptians have not, as appears, any certain epocha to go by, older than the Egyptian years of Nabonaſſar; and afterwards from the death of Alexander, and Ptolemy Philadelphus, and Auguſtus's victory at Actium.

II. If from the Egyptians we remove our diſcourſe unto the Grecians, we are ſtill plunged into greater uncertainties; it being acknowledged by themſelves that they had no certain ſucceſſion of time before the Olympiads. To which purpoſe the teſtimony of Varro in Cenſorinus is generally taken notice of, diſtributing time into three parts; reckoning two of them to be unknown and fabulous, and the hiſtorical part of time to begin with the firſt Olympiad. Indeed Scaliger and ſome others are loth to reject all that ſecond part of time as fabulous, which was in the interval between Deucalion's flood and the Olympiads; and therefore they had rather call it heroical, though much corrupted with fables, and to think that it was hiſtorical as to perſons, but fabulous as to the actions of thoſe perſons. But granting this, yet we are wholly to ſeek for any certain account of the ſucceſſion of time and perſons, for want of ſome certain Epochas, which, like the Pole Star, ſhould guide us in our paſſage through that vaſt ocean of the Grecian hiſtory. It muſt be confeſſed that ſome of the learned Heathens have taken a great deal of pains this way to find out ſome certain periods to fix on in the time before the Olympiads; as Philochorus, Apollodorus, and Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis, and others, who out of their ſkill in aſtronomy ſought to bring down ſome certain intervals between the deſtruction of Troy and the firſt Olympic game of Pelops, reſtored by Hercules and Atreus. But granting that their Epochas were fixed and certain, that

Scalig. not. in Can. Iſagog. l. iii.

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that the deſtruction of Troy was upon the 23d of Thargelion, the 11th month of the Attic account, and that the Olympic game fell out anſwerably to the ninth of our July, and theſe things were evidently proved from aſtronomical obſervations, yet how vaſt an account of time is loſt quite beyond the ſiege of Troy! And beſides that, as to all other accidents in the intervals between theſe two Epochas which could not be proved by celeſtial obſervations concurrent with them, they were left at a very great uncertainty ſtill; only they might gueſs whether they approached nearer to one Epocha than the other by the ſeries of families and their generations (three of which made a century of years), whereby they might come to ſome conjectures, but could not arrive at any certainty at all. CHAP. VI.

III. But that which is moſt to our purpoſe is, that all the hiſtory of the original of Greece, the foundations of their ſeveral kingdoms, the ſucceſſion of their firſt kings, and all that comes under the name of the hiſtory of their ancient times, is clearly given over by their own moſt ſkilful chronologers, as matters out of the reach of any clear evidence. Thence come ſuch great differences concerning the antiquity of their ancient kingdoms. The Argolic kingdom by Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis is ſuppoſed to be the oldeſt, and the Attic younger than it by forty generations, which according to their computation comes to 1000 years, which is impoſſible; and yet the Arcadians, who gave themſelves out to be older than the moon, are ſuppoſed to be younger by him than the graſshoppers of Athens by nine generations; and the Phthiotic, under Deucalion, younger than the Arcadica by forty-two generations; which Scaliger might well ſay were impoſſible and inconſiſtent. The Sicyonian kingdom is by moſt ſuppoſed to be of greateſt antiquity among the Grecians, from which Varro began his hiſtory, as St. Auſtin tells us; and yet as to this Pauſanias only reckons the names of ſome

Auguſt. de Civit. Dei, l. xviii. c. 2.

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BOOK I. ſome kings there, without any ſucceſſion of time among them; and yet as to thoſe names Africanus, and Euſebius from him, diſſent from Pauſanias; and which is moſt obſervable, Homer reckons Adraſtus, who is the 23d in the account of Africanus, to be the firſt that reigned in Sicyon; whoſe time was after the inſtitution of the Olympic game by Pelops: Of him thus Homer, Il. ii. 572.

Καὶ Σικυῶν, ὅθ' ἄρ 'Αδρῆστος πρῶτ' ἐμβασίλευεν.

whereby he expreſſeth Adraſtus to be the firſt king of Sicyon; and not, as Scaliger would interpret it, that Adraſtus was firſt king of the Sicyonians before he was of the Argives; for in the time of Adraſtus at Sicyon, either Atreus or Thyeſtes was king of the Argives: for in the ſecond year of Phæſtus and Adraſtus, his ſuppoſed predeceſſor in Sicyon, Atreus reſtored the Olympic game of Pelops in the 41ſt year of their reign; and they reigned at Argi 65 years. Now that Phæſtus at Sicyon is ſuppoſed to reign but eight years; and therefore the reign of Adraſtus at Sicyon falls in with that of Atreus and Thyeſtes at Argi or Mycenæ. Thus we ſee now how uncertain the account of times was before the beginning of the Olympiads among the Grecians; which is fully acknowledged by Diodorus, and the very reaſon given which we here inſiſt on, Διὰ τὸ μηδὲν παράπηγμα παρειληφέναι περὶ τέτων πιςευόμενον, *That there was no certainty in the ancient Grecian hiſtory, becauſe they had no certain term* (which he calls Parapegma; as others Epocha; and Cenſorinus, Titulus) *from whence to deduce their accounts*. But now from the time of the Olympiads (i. e. from the firſt of them after their reſtoration by Iphitus, wherein the names of the conquerors were engraven in braſs tablets for the purpoſe) the ſucceſſion of time is moſt certain and hiſtorical among the Grecians; by which account we have from thence a certain way of commenſurating the ſacred and prophane hiſtory. All the difficulty is in what year of ſacred

Diod. l. i. c. 5.

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ſacred hiſtory the Olympiads began; which Scaliger thus finds out. Cenſorinus writes (in the year of Chriſt 238, which was of the Julian period 4951) that that year was from the firſt Olympiad of Iphitus 1014; the firſt Olympiad was of the Julian period 3938; which was, according to our learned primate, A. M. 3228, and the 35th of Uzziah, king of Judah, or the 34th, as Cappellus thinks: ſo that from henceforward we have a clear account of times, which we have demonſtrated to have been ſo uncertain before.

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. v. p. 382.

IV. If we come from the Greeks further into theſe European parts, we ſhall find as much darkneſs and obſcurity as to ancient times, if not more, than in thoſe already diſcourſed of. For the truth is, the account of times before the Romans in Italy, Germany, Old Gallia or Britain, are ſcarce fit to be diſcourſed of under any head than that of impoſture. Not that I think thoſe nations had lain in a perpetual ſleep till the Romans waked them into ſome kind of civility, but that they had no certain way of conveying down the tranſactions of their own and former times, to the view of poſterity. On which account we may juſtly reject all thoſe pretended ſucceſſions of kings here in Britain, from Gomer and Brute, as fabulous. And it will be the leſs wonder it ſhould be ſo in thoſe then accounted barbarous nations, when even among thoſe who were the planters of knowledge and civility among others, the account of their ancient times is ſo dark, confuſed, and uncertain; as it would ſufficiently appear to any that would take the pains to examine the ſucceſſion of the two firſt Dynaſties among the Latins; the firſt before Æneas's coming into Italy, and the ſecond of the Æneadæ after. And certainly it will be ſufficient ground to queſtion the account of times before, if in the third Dynaſty, when the ſucceſſion ſeems ſo clear, and ſo certain an Epocha as the building of Rome, to deduce their accounts from their chronology be uncertain; which I ſhall

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I ſhall briefly ſpeak to. For although Porcius Cato have, in Dionyſius, the honour of finding out the firſt Palilia of the city of Rome (which was the feaſt obſerved to the honour of the goddeſs Pales, in the time of which the foundations of Rome were laid), yet there appears no great certainty in his undertaking; for therein he was after contradicted by the learned Roman, Varro. Dionyſius tells us, that Cato found, by the Cenſors Tables, the exact time from the expulſion of the kings to the time of the city's being taken by the Gauls; from which time to his own he could not miſs of it from the Faſti Conſulares; ſo that it cannot be denied but that Cato might have a certain account of times from the Regifugium to the time he writ his Origines. But what certainty Cato could have from the firſt Palilia of the city to the expulſion of Tarquin, we cannot underſtand; for the ſucceſſion of kings muſt needs be very uncertain, unleſs it be demonſtrated from ſome public monuments or certain records, or ſome public actions certainly known to have fallen out preciſely in ſuch a year of their ſeveral reigns. Now none of theſe do occur in the Roman hiſtory, in all that interval from the Palilia to the Regifugium; ſo that not only the whole interval, but the time of every particular king's reign, are very uncertain. And therefore Varro, being deſtitute of any demonſtration of that time, had recourſe to L. Tarrutius Firmanus, to ſee if by his ſkill in aſtronomy he could certainly find out the firſt Palilia of Rome: his anſwer was, that he found that the city was built in the time of an eclipſe of the ſun, which was in the third year of the ſixth Olympiad; according to which account Varro proceeded, and thence aroſe the difference between the Palilia Catoniana and Varroniana; the latter falling out in the 23d of Iphitus, the other in the 24th. But if we believe Joſeph Scaliger, there could not be an eclipſe of the ſun at the time affirmed by Tarrutius: but yet granting an eclipſe of the ſun then,

Scaliger de Emend. Temp. l. v. p. 388.

then, what certainty can we have of the ſucceſſion of the ſeveral kings afterwards, without which there can be no certain computation *ab urbe condita?* If then the Romans, who had ſo great advantage of knowing times, and were withal ſo inquiſitive concerning the building of their city (which was a thing of no very remote diſtance), could attain to no abſolute certainty about it, what certainty can we expect as to an account of far ancienter times, either from them or others, when they had no Cenſors Tables, nor Faſti Conſulares to be guided by? And thus much may ſerve to ſhew the great uncertainty of Heathen chronology, as to the giving an account of ancient times. CHAP VI.

V. And yet were it only an uncertainty as to chronology, we might better bear with it; for the miſtake, merely in computation of times, were not ſo dangerous (any further than the credibility of the hiſtory depends on the computation, as in point of antiquity), if we were but certain that the perſons, and actions related of them, were ſuch as they are reported to be. But that which adds much to the confuſion and uncertainty of Heathen hiſtory, is, the frequency of impoſtures, which are more hard to be diſcovered, in that there are no authentic hiſtories of thoſe times extant; which hath both given occaſion to variety of impoſtures, and much hindered their diſcovery. For the curioſity of men leading them back into a ſearch after ancient times, it makes them exceeding credulous in embracing whatever pretends to give them any conduct through thoſe dark and obſcure paths of ancient hiſtory. And the world hath never been wanting of ſuch as would be ready to abuſe the ſimple credulity of well-meaning, but leſs wary men; but thoſe ages have been moſt *feracious* in the production of ſuch perſons, which have pretended to more learning than they had. The pretence of learning made ſuch perſons appear, and the want of it made them not be diſcovered. Thus it was not only of old among the Chaldæan and Egyptian

BOOK I.

Egyptian prieſts, and the Grecian poets and hiſtorians, of whom we have ſpoken already, but even among thoſe who might have learned more truth from the religion they profeſſed, than to think it ſtood in need of their lies; for there can be no greater diſparagement offered to truth, than to defend it with any thing but itſelf; nothing laying truth ſo open to ſuſpicion, as when falſehood comes to be its advocate: and a falſe teſtimony diſcovered, doth more prejudice to a good cauſe, than it could any ways advantage it, were it not diſcovered. And therefore their labours have been as ſerviceable to the world who have diſcovered impoſtures, as thoſe who have directly maintained truth againſt its open oppoſers; thoſe being ſo much more dangerous, in that they appear in the diſguiſe of truth, and therefore are with more difficulty diſcovered. Such a one was that *ignis fatuus* that appeared in a kind of twilight in the Chriſtian world between the former darkneſs of barbariſm and the approaching light of knowledge; I mean Annius Viterbienſis, who, like Hannibal, in paſſing the Alps, not finding a way ready to his mind, ſets himſelf to burning the woods, and firing the rocks, and diſſolving them with vinegar to make a paſſage through them. So Annius being beſet in thoſe ſnowy and grey-headed Alps of ancient hiſtory, and finding no way clear for him according to his fancy, he labours to burn down all certain records, to eat through the credit of undoubted authors, to make a more free paſſage for his own hiſtory, which he deduceth ſuitably to Scripture from the concurrent teſtimony of the oldeſt hiſtorians. To which purpoſe a new Beroſus, Manetho, Philo, Metaſthenes (as he miſtook for Megaſthenes), and Xenophon, muſt put on a grave diſguiſe, and walk abroad the world with a mantle of antiquity about their ſhoulders; although they were nothing elſe but airy phantaſms, covered over with the *cowl* of the monk of Viterbo. For being himſelf ſomewhat more verſed in

in the hiſtory of thoſe elder times than generally perſons were in the age he lived in, he made that unhappy uſe of his ſkill to play the mountebank with his learning, and to abuſe the credulity of thoſe who have better ſtomachs than palates, and ſooner ſwallow down the compoſitions that are given them, than find out the ingredients of them. Thus Annius puts a good face on his new-old authors, bids them be bold and confident, and they would fare the better. And the truth is, they tell their ſtory ſo punctually in all circumſtances, in thoſe things which had no certain conveyance to poſterity, that that were ſufficient ground to any intelligent perſon to queſtion their authority. But leſt his authors ſhould at any time want an interpreter to make out their full meaning, he ſets himſelf a large commentary upon them; and certainly he was the fitteſt perſon in the world to do it; for, *cujus eſt condere, ejus eſt interpretari*; none ſo fit to explain Annius, as Annius himſelf. The whole ſtory of this impoſture, how he made the inſcriptions himſelf, and hid them under ground; how they were digged thence, and brought to Annius; how Annius cauſed them to be ſent to the magiſtrates, and after publiſhed them in the equipage they are in, is at large related by that learned biſhop, Antonius Auguſtinus, from Latinus Latinius. Anton. Auguſt. Dialog. 11.

CHAP. VI.

From a like quarry to this came out thoſe other famous inſcriptions, walking under the ſpecious title of *Antiquitatum Etruſcarum Fragmenta*, wherein, beſides many palpable incongruities to the cuſtoms of thoſe eldeſt times, diſcovered partly by Leo Allatius in his diſcourſe concerning them, there are ſo many particular ſtories and circumſtances related concerning Noah's being in Italy, and other things ſo far beyond probability of reaſon, that it is a wonder there are yet any perſons pretending to learning, who ſhould build their diſcourſes upon ſuch rotten and ſandy foundations as theſe inſcriptions are. But VI.

BOOK I. though Ixion might, Jupiter would never have been deceived with a *cloud* instead of Juno; so though persons unacquainted with the lineaments of Truth, may be easily imposed on with appearances instead of her; yet such persons who have sagacity enough to discern the air of her countenance from the paint of forgeries, will never suffer themselves to be overreached by such vain pretenders. But these impostors are like the astrologers at Rome, ever banished, and yet ever there; and so these are ever exploded by all lovers of truth, yet always find some to applaud and entertain them. Although it be more difficult to do so now in the present light of knowledge, and all advantages for learning, than it was in those elder times, when the heathen Priests pretended to the monopoly of learning among themselves, and made it one of their great designs to keep all others in dependance on themselves, thereby to keep up their veneration the better among the people. And therefore all the records they had of learning or history were carefully locked up, and preserved among the priests; and lest at any time others might get a view of them, they were sure to preserve them in a peculiar character, distinct from that in civil and common use: by which means the Heathen Priests had all imaginable opportunities and conveniences for deceiving the silly people, and thereby keeping them in an obsequious ignorance; which is never the mother of any true devotion, but of the greatest superstition.

VII. It is well known of the Egyptian priests, that the sacred characters of their temples were seldom made known to any but such as were of their own number and family (the priesthood being there hereditary), or such others as by long converse had insinuated themselves into their society, as some of the Greek philosophers and historians had done; and yet we have some reason to think they were not over free and communicative to some of them, by the slender account

Diod. l. iii. c. 3.

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account they give of ſeveral things, which are ſuppoſed to be well known among the Egyptians. That the Phœnician Prieſts had their peculiar and ſacred characters too, is evident from the words of Philo Byblius concerning Sanchoniathon, if we take Bochartus's expoſition of them. He tells us that his hiſtory was compared τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδύτων εὑρεθεῖσιν ἀποκρύφοις Ἀμμενέων γράμμασιν ἃ οὐκ ἦν πᾶσι γνώριμα, *with the inſcriptions in the temples written in the Ammunean letters, which are known to few: Literæ Ammuneorum* (ſaith Bochartus) *ſunt literæ templorum, literæ in ſacris exceptæ.* For חמה is the ſun, thence חמן the *temple of the ſun*, whom the Phœnicians worſhipped as their principal Deity, under the name of *Beel-ſamen, the Lord of Heaven.* The ſame author tells us out of Diogenes Laertius, of a book of Democritus, περὶ τῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἱερῶν γραμμάτων· by which it is evident that the Babylonian Prieſts had their ſacred characters too: and of a teſtimony of Theodoret of all the Grecian temples, Ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ναοῖς ἴδιοι τινὲς ἦσαν χαρακτῆρες γραμμάτων, ἃς ἱερατικὰς προσηγόρευον, *that they had ſome peculiar characters, which were called ſacred.* But that learned author thinks there is no neceſſity of underſtanding it peculiarly of the Grecians, becauſe the Greek Fathers called all Heathens by the name of Greeks: but if ſo, the teſtimony is the larger, and amounts to an univerſal teſtimony of the Heathen temples.

CHAP. VI.

Euſeb. Præpoſ. Evang. l. i. c. 9.

Bochart. Geogr. ſac. p. ii. l. ii. c. 17.

Theod. in Gen. Quæſt. 61. p. 48. Edit. Par.

VIII. Neither was this only peculiar to them, if we believe ſome perſons of greater learning than judgment, who attribute this diſtinction of ſacred and vulgar characters to the Jews as well as others, but without any probability of reaſon: for theſe learned men, being ſtrongly poſſeſſed with the opinion of the modern Jews concerning the antiquity of the preſent Hebrew characters, and finding themſelves preſſed not only with the teſtimony of ſome ancient Rabbins, but with the ſtronger evidence of the ancient Shekels about Solomon's time, inſcribed with the Samaritan

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BOOK I.

letters, have at last found this evasion, that the Samaritan letters were in vulgar use; but the present characters were then sacred, and not made common till after the time of the captivity. But this seems to be a mere shift, found out by some modern Jews, and greedily embraced by their followers; because thereby they are in hopes to evade the strength of the contrary arguments, which otherwise they can find no probable solution of. And a mere shift it will appear to be, to any one that considers on how little ground of reason it stands; for none of those reasons which held for such a distinction of characters among the Heathens, can have any place among the Jews: for it was never any part of God's design to have the law kept from the people's view. Truth is never so fearful of being seen abroad; it is only Falsehood that walks under disguises, and must have its hiding-places to retreat to: nay, God expressly commanded it as a duty of all the Jews, to search and study his law; which they could not do, if it were locked up from them in an unknown character. Did not God himself promulge it among the people of Israel, by the ministry of Moses? Did he not command it to be *as frontlets between their eyes*, and *signs upon their hands?* Not that *phylacteries* should be made of the law to wear, as the Pharisees interpreted it, and others from them have mistaken; but that they should have the law in continual remembrance, as if it were always between their eyes, and engraven upon their hands. Again, if we suppose the law to be among the people, but in the vulgar character, I would fain know, what sanctity, majesty, and authority there was in that character, more than in the words and matter? And if there were, how comes the vulgar use of it to be nowhere forbidden? and how durst Ezra, as is supposed, after the captivity, profane so sacred a thing, by exposing it to common use? But granting them yet further, that it was lawful, but not useful, to make use of that sacred

Exod. xiii. 16. Deut. vi. 8.

cred character, I demand then, how comes that diſ- CHAP. VI.
uſe to continue ſo punctually till the time of Ezra, and that it ſhould never be divulged before? when there was ſo great reaſon to make it common, ſince the ſquare letters are leſs operoſe, more expedite and facile than the Samaritan, which is, when time ſerves, uſed as a plea for their great antiquity. But yielding yet more, that the ſacred character was only uſed for the authentic copy of the law, which was to decide all differences of other copies (which ſome run to as their laſt ſhift), I appeal to any man's reaſon, whether this be not the moſt improbable of all? For how could ſuch a copy be the judge of all others, which could not be read or underſtood by thoſe who appealed to it? Or was the knowledge and reading of this character peculiar to the high-prieſt, and conveyed down as a *cabala* from one to another? But how many incongruities would follow hence, in caſe one high-prieſt ſhould die before his ſon was capable of underſtanding the letters, and ſo that ſacred treaſure muſt needs be loſt; or had they it all by inſpiration, and underſtood the ſacred character by Urim and Thummim? Thus every way this opinion among the Jews is preſſed with inconveniences; but it was moſt ſuitable to the Heathen prieſts to maintain a *meum* and *tuum* between their own character and the vulgar; for hereby they prohibited all prying into their myſteries by any but thoſe who had the ſame intereſt with themſelves, and therefore were unlikely to diſcover any thing that might leſſen their reputation: whereas had there been nothing but truth in their records, or that truth had been for their intereſt, what need had there been of ſo great reſervedneſs and privacy? But when the diſcovery of truth would undeceive the world, it was their intereſt to lock it up, and to give out ſuch things to the vulgar which might advance themſelves and pleaſe them; which artifices of theirs

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BOOK I. give no ſmall ground to queſtion the credibility of their hiſtories.

IX. Eſpecially if we add what we promiſed in the laſt place, to ſhew the want of credibility in the report of ancient times among them, which was not only defectiveneſs and uncertainty, but apparent partiality to themſelves, and inconſiſtency with each other. How evident is it in all theſe nations we have ſpoken to, how much they ſtrive to enhance the reputation of their own nation, and to that end blend the hiſtory of other nations with their own, to make theirs ſeem the greater? How much do the Egyptians tell us of the excellency of their ancient laws and government? And yet how evident is it, from their own hiſtories, that no ſuch laws were obſerved by their kings as they ſpeak of? Can we think that ſuch kings as Chemmis, and the reſt of them who built thoſe vaſt ſtructures of the Pyramids, and employed myriads of men for ſo many years for the doing of them, would be content to be ſo dieted by their laws, as Hecatæus and Diodorus tell us they were to be? Nay, it ſeems to be very ſuſpicious that the great enterprizes of their famous Seſooſis are merely fabulous; and ſome think, an attributing to themſelves what was done by the Aſſyrian emperor in his time: by which we may gueſs what to think of the great conqueſts of Oſiris and Iſis, and their ſubduing almoſt the whole world to them. And it is moſt evident how partial the Egyptians are in diſſembling their greateſt loſſes; as is clear in the ſtory of the conqueſt of Pharao Necho by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xlvi. 12. of which there is not the leaſt mention in Herodotus or Diodorus. But on the contrary, Herodotus tells us this Necos, as he calls him, conquered the Syrians at Magdalos; and the ſtory of Vaphres and Amaſis, in him ſeems to be only a diſguiſe of Nebuchadnezzar's conqueſt; only leſt men ſhould think them conquered by a foreigner, they make

Herodot. lib. ii.

make Amaſis to be an Egyptian plebeian. Again, what a vaſt number of cities doth Diodorus tell us of, that were in Egypt in their eldeſt times; no leſs than 18,000; when yet himſelf confeſſeth, in the time of Ptolemæus Lagi there were reckoned but ſomewhat above 3000 cities; and then Egypt was the moſt populous that ever it had been. How probable doth this ſound, that in thoſe eldeſt times ſuch vaſt multitudes of cities ſhould be erected? But the truth is, it is not unſuitable to their opinion of the production of the firſt men; which were cauſed, they ſay, by the heat of the ſun, and the mud of Nilus; and it is certain then they might be the moſt populous nation in the world: for there could be no defect as to either efficient or material cauſe, there being mud enough to produce myriads, and the ſun hot enough to impregnate it. The partiality of other nations hath been already diſcourſed of in our paſſage; and ſo likewiſe hath their mutual repugnancy to and inconſiſtency with each other: which yet might be more fully manifeſted from the contradictions in reference to the Egyptian hiſtory, between Manetho, Herodotus, Diodorus, Dicæarchus, Eratoſthenes, and all who have ſpoken of it: as to the Aſſyrian empire, between Herodotus, Diodorus, and Julius Africanus: as to the Perſian empire, between Herodotus and Cteſias; and thoſe in no inconſiderable things, as is evident in Photius's Excerpta out of him. Among the Grecians we have already diſcovered it, as to their hiſtory and geography; and if we ſhould enter into their theology, and the hiſtory of that, we ſhould find their other differences inconſiderable, if compared with theſe: of which we may partly make a conjecture by the incredible ſpite that is borne by the graveſt Greek authors, as Strabo, Plutarch, and others, towards Euhemerus Siculus, for offering to deliver the hiſtory of Jupiter, which he ſaith he tranſcribed from the *golden pillar in the temple of* Jupiter Triphyllius *in* Panchotis.

Diodor. l. i. c. 31.

BOOK I.

But I ſuppoſe enough hath been diſcovered already, to prove that there is no credibility in any of thoſe Heathen hiſtories, which pretend to give an account of ancient times; there being in all of them ſo much defect and inſufficiency, ſo great uncertainty and confuſion, ſo much partiality and inconſiſtency with each other. It remains, now, that I proceed to demonſtrate the credibility of that account of ancient times which is reported in the ſacred Scriptures; which will be the ſecond part of our taſk.

BOOK

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BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

The Certainty of the Writings of Moſes.

In order to the proving the Truth of Scripture-hiſtory, ſeveral Hypotheſes laid down. I. *The firſt concerns the Reaſonableneſs of preſerving the ancient Hiſtory of the World in ſome certain Records, from the Importance of the Things,* II. *and the Inconveniences of mere Tradition or conſtant Revelation.* III. *The ſecond concerns the Certainty that the Records under* Moſes's *Name were undoubtedly his. The Certainty of a Matter of Fact enquired into in general, and proved as to this Particular,* IV. *by univerſal Conſent,* V. *and ſettling a Commonwealth upon his Laws.* VI, VII. *The Impoſſibility of an Impoſtor as to the Writings of* Moſes *demonſtrated. The Pleas to the contrary largely anſwered.*

HAVING ſufficiently demonſtrated the want of credibility in the account of ancient times, given by thoſe nations who have made the greateſt pretence to learning and antiquity in the world, we now proceed to evince the credibility and certainty of that account which is given us in ſacred Scriptures: in order to which, I ſhall premiſe theſe following hypotheſes. CHAP. I.

Firſt, *It ſtands to the greateſt reaſon, that an account of things ſo concerning and remarkable ſhould not be always left to the uncertainty of an oral tradition, but ſhould be timely entered into certain records, to be preſerved to the memory of poſterity.* For it being of concernment to the world, in order to the eſtabliſhment of belief as to future things, to be ſettled in the belief Hypoth. 1.

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BOOK II.

lief that all things paſt were managed by Divine Providence, there muſt be certain records of former ages, or elſe the mind of man will be perpetually hovering in the greateſt uncertainties; eſpecially where there is ſuch a mutual dependence and concatenation of one thing with another, as there is in all the Scripture-hiſtory. For take away but any one of the main foundations of the Moſaical hiſtory, all the ſuperſtructure will be exceedingly weakened, if it doth not fall quite to the ground. For man's obligation to obedience unto God, doth neceſſarily ſuppoſe his original to be from him; his hearkening to any propoſals of favour from God, doth ſuppoſe his apoſtaſy and fall; God's deſigning to ſhew mercy and favour to fallen man, doth ſuppoſe that there muſt be ſome way whereby the great Creator muſt reveal himſelf as to the conditions on which fallen man may expect a recovery; the revealing of theſe conditions in ſuch a way, whereon a ſuſpicious (becauſe guilty) creature may firmly rely, doth ſuppoſe ſo certain a recording of them, as may be leaſt liable to any ſuſpicion of impoſture or deceit. For although nothing elſe be in itſelf neceſſary from God to man, in order to his ſalvation, but the bare revealing in a certain way the terms on which he muſt expect it; yet, conſidering the unbounded nature of Divine goodneſs, reſpecting not only the good of ſome particular perſons, but of the whole ſociety of mankind, it ſtands to the greateſt reaſon that ſuch a revelation ſhould be ſo propounded, as might be with equal certainty conveyed to the community of mankind; which could not with any ſuch evidence of credibility be done by private and particular revelations (which give ſatisfaction only to the inward ſenſes of the partakers of them) as by a public recording of the matters of divine revelation by ſuch a perſon, who is enabled to give the world all reaſonable ſatisfaction, that what he did was not of any private deſign of his own head, but that he was deputed to it by no leſs than Divine authority.

And

And therefore it ſtands to the higheſt reaſon, that where Divine revelation is neceſſary for the certain requiring of aſſent, the matter to be believed ſhould have a certain uniform conveyance to men's minds, rather than that perpetually new revelations ſhould be required for the making known of thoſe things, which, being once recorded, are not liable to ſo many impoſtures, as the other way might have been under pretended revelations. For then men are not put to a continual trial of every perſon pretending Divine revelation, as to the evidences which he brings of Divine authority; but the great matters of concernment being already recorded and atteſted by all rational evidence as to the truth of the things, their minds therein reſt ſatisfied, without being under a continual heſitancy leſt the revelation of one ſhould contradict another. CHAP. I.

II. For ſuppoſing that God had left the matters of Divine revelation unrecorded at all, but left them to be diſcovered in every age by a ſpirit of prophecy, by ſuch a multitude as might be ſufficient to inform the world of the truth of the things; we cannot but conceive that an innumerable company of croaking Enthuſiaſts would be continually pretending commiſſions from heaven, by which the minds of men would be left in continual diſtraction, becauſe they would have no certain infallible rules given them, whereby to difference the good and evil ſpirit from each other. But now ſuppoſing God to inſpire ſome particular perſons not only to reveal, but to record divine truths, then whatever evidences can be brought atteſting a divine revelation in them, will likewiſe prove the undoubted certainty and infallibility of thoſe writings, it being impoſſible that perſons employed by a God of truth ſhould make it their deſign to impoſe upon the world; which gives us a rational account why the wiſe God did not ſuffer the hiſtory of the world to lie ſtill unrecorded, but made choice of ſuch a perſon to record it, who gave

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Hypoth. 2. Secondly, *We have as great certainty that Moses was the author of the records going under his name, as we can have*

have of any matter of fact done at so great a distance of time from us. We are to consider that there are two very distinct questions to be thought of concerning a divine revelation to any person at a considerable distance of time from us; and those are, what evidences can be given that the matters recorded are of a true divine revelation, and what evidence we have of the truth of the matter of fact, that such things were recorded by such persons. They who do not carefully distinguish between these two questions, will soon run themselves into an inextricable labyrinth, when they either seek to understand themselves, or explain to others the grounds on which they believe the Scriptures to be the word of God. The first step in order to which, must be the proving the undoubted certainty of the matter of fact, or the truth of the history, that such persons were really existent, and did either do or record the things we speak of. After this succeeds the other, to prove not only the real existence of the things, but that the persons who recorded the things were assisted by an infallible spirit; then there can be no reason at all to doubt but those records are the word of God. The first of these is, that which at present we enquire after, the certainty of the matter of fact, that the records under the name of Moses were undoubtedly his. And here it will be most unreasonable for any to seek for further evidence and demonstration of it, than the matter to be proved is capable of. But if they should, I suppose we have sufficient reason to demonstrate the folly of such a demand; and that on these accounts. CHAP. I.

1. Who ever yet undertook to bring matters of fact into mathematical demonstrations, or thought he had ground to question the certainty of any thing that was not proved in a mathematical way to him? Who would ever undertake to prove that Archimedes was killed at Syracuse, by any of the demonstrations he was then about? or that Euclid was the undoubted author of the Geometry under his name? Or do men

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men queſtion theſe things for want of ſuch demonſtrations? Yet this is all we at preſent deſire, only the ſame liberty here which is uſed in any thing of a like nature.

2. I demand of the perſon who denies this moral certainty to be ſufficient for an aſſent, whether he doth queſtion every thing in the world which he was not preſent at the doing of himſelf? If he be peremptorily reſolved to believe nothing but what he ſees, he is fit for nothing but a voyage to Anticyræ, or to be ſoundly purged with *hellebore*, to free him from thoſe cloudy humours that make him ſuſpect the whole world to be an impoſture. But we cannot ſuppoſe any man ſo deſtitute of reaſon, as to queſtion the truth of every matter of fact which he doth not ſee himſelf: if he doth then firmly believe any thing, there muſt be ſuppoſed ſufficient grounds to induce him to ſuch a belief; and then what ground can there be to queſtion the certainty of ſuch things, which have as great evidence as any of thoſe things have which he moſt firmly believes? And this is all we deſire from him.

3. Do we not ſee that the moſt concerning and weighty actions of men's lives are built on no other foundation than this moral certainty? Yet men do not in the leaſt queſtion the truth of the thing they rely upon. As is moſt evident in all titles to eſtates, derived from anceſtors either by donation or purchaſe: in all trading, which goes upon the moral certainty that there are ſuch places as the Indies, or France, or Spain, &c. in all journeyings, that there is ſuch a place as that I am going to, and this is the way thither. For theſe we have but this moral certainty; for the contrary to both theſe are poſſible, and the affirmatives are indemonſtrable. In eating and drinking there is a poſſibility of being poiſoned by every bit of meat, or drop of drink; do we therefore continually doubt whether we ſhall be ſo or no? Chiefly this is ſeen in all natural affection and piety in

in children towards parents, which undoubtedly suppose the truth of that, which it was impossible they could be witnesses of themselves, viz. their coming out of their mothers' wombs. And doth any one think this sufficient ground to question his mother, because the contrary is impossible to be demonstrated to him? In short, then, either we must destroy all historical faith out of the world, and believe nothing (though never so much attested) but what we see ourselves, or else we must acknowledge that a moral certainty is a sufficient foundation for an undoubted assent; not such a one *cui non potest subesse falsum*, but such a one *cui non subest dubium*, i. e. an *assent undoubted*, though not infallible. By which we see what little reason the Atheist on one side can have to question the truth of the Scriptures, as to the history of it, and what little ground the Papists, on the other side, have to make a pretence of the necessity of infallibility, as to the proposal of such things, where moral certainty is sufficient, that is, to the matter of fact. CHAP. I.

IV. Which I now come to prove, as to the subject in hand, viz. that the writings of Moses are undoubtedly his. Which I prove by a twofold argument: 1. *An universal consent of persons, who were best able to know the truth of the things in question.* 2. *The settling of a commonwealth upon the laws delivered by Moses.* 1. The universal consent of persons most capable of judging in the case in hand. I know nothing the most scrupulous and inquisitive mind can possibly desire in order to satisfaction, concerning any matter of fact, beyond an universal consent of such persons who have a greater capacity of knowing the truth of it than we can have; and those are all such persons who have lived nearest those times when the things were done, and have best understood the affairs of the times when the things were pretended to be done. Can we possibly conceive, that among the people of the Jews, who were so exceedingly prone to transgress the

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were in the ſame age, and conveyed it down by a certain tradition to poſterity? Or did not the Iſraelites all conſtantly believe it? What! not they, who would ſooner part with their lives and fortunes, than admit any variation or alteration as to their law? CHAP. I.

V. Well, but if we ſhould ſuppoſe the whole Jewiſh nation partial to themſelves, and that, out of honour to the memory of ſo great a perſon as Moſes, they ſhould attribute their ancient laws and records to him, which is all that infidelity itſelf can imagine in this caſe; yet this cannot be with any ſhadow of reaſon pretended. For,

1. Who were thoſe perſons who did give out this law to the Jews under Moſes's name? Certainly they, who undertake to contradict that which is received by common conſent, muſt bring ſtronger and clearer evidence than that on which that conſent is grounded, or elſe their exceptions deſerve to be rejected with the higheſt indignation. What proof can be then brought, that not only the Jewiſh nation, but the whole Chriſtian world, hath been ſo lamentably befooled to believe thoſe things with an undoubted aſſent, which are only the contrivances of ſome cunning men?

2. At what time could theſe things be contrived? Either while the memory of Moſes and his actions were remaining, or afterwards. Firſt, How could it poſſibly be when his memory was remaining? for then all things were ſo freſh in their memories, that it was impoſſible a thing of this univerſal nature could be forged of him. If after, then I demand whether the people had obſerved the law of Moſes before or no? If not, then they muſt certainly know it at the time of its promulgation to be counterfeit: for had it been from Moſes, it would have been obſerved before their times; if it was obſerved before, then either continually down from the time of Moſes, or not. If continually down, then it was of Moſes's doing, if we ſuppoſe him to have had that authority

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among the people which the objection ſuppoſeth; if not, then ſtill the nearer Moſes's time, the more difficult ſuch a counterfeiting could be, becauſe the conſtitutions which Moſes had left among them would have remained in their memories; whereby they would eaſily reject all pretences and counterfeits.

3. How can we conceive the nation of the Jews would have ever embraced ſuch a law, had it not been of Moſes's enacting among them in that ſtate of time when he did? For then the people were in fitteſt capacity to receive a law, being grown a great people, and therefore neceſſary to have laws; newly delivered from bondage, and therefore wanting laws of their own; and entering into a ſettled ſtate of commonwealth, which was the moſt proper ſeaſon of giving laws.

VI. Theſe conſiderations make it ſo clear, that it is almoſt impoſſible to conceive the nation of the Jews could have their laws given to them but at the time of their being in the wilderneſs, before they were ſettled in Canaan. For ſuppoſe we at preſent, to gratify ſo far the objection, that theſe laws were brought forth long after the conſtitution of the government and the national ſettlement under Moſes's name, how improbable, nay how impoſſible is it to alter the fundamental laws of a nation after long ſettlement? What confuſion of intereſts doth this bring? What diſturbance among all ſorts of people, who muſt be diſſeiſed of their rights, and brought to ſuch ſtrange unwonted cuſtoms, ſo ſeemingly againſt their intereſts, as many of the conſtitutions among the Jews were? For can we imagine that a people, always devoted to their own intereſt, would, after it had been quietly ſettled in their land by conſtitutions after the cuſtom of other nations, preſently, under a pretence of a copy of laws found (that were pretended to be given by one in former ages of great eſteem, called Moſes), throw open all their former incloſures, and

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and part with their former laws, for these of which they have no evidence, but the words of those that told it them? We have a clear instance for this among the Romans: although there were great evidence given of the undoubted certainty that the books found in Numa's grave by Petilius were his, yet, because they were adjudged by the senate to be against the present laws, they were without further enquiry adjudged to be burnt. Was not here the greatest likelihood that might be, that these should have taken place among the Romans, for the great veneration for wisdom which Numa was in among them, and the great evidence that these were certain remainders of his, wherein he gave a true account of the superstitions in use among them? Yet lest the state should be unsettled by it, they were prohibited so much as a public view, when the Prætor had sworn they were against the established laws. Can we then conceive the Jewish nation would have embraced so burthensome and ceremonious a law as Moses's was, had it been brought among them in such a way as the books of Numa, though with all imaginable evidence that it was undoubtedly his, especially when they were engaged to the observation of some laws or customs already, by which their commonwealth had been established? And withal, these laws of Moses seeming so much against the interest and good husbandry of a nation, as all the neighbour nations thought, who for that accused them to be an idle and slothful people, as they judged by their resting wholly one day in seven, the great and many solemn feasts they had, the repairing of all the males to Jerusalem thrice a year, the sabbatical years, years of Jubilee, &c. These things were apparently against the interest of such a nation, whose great subsistence was upon pasturage and agriculture. So that it is evident these laws respected not the outward interest of the nation, and so could not be the contrivance of any politicians among them, but did immediately

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aim at the honour of the God whom they ſerved; for whom they were to part even with their civil intereſts: the doing of which by a people generally taken notice of for a particular love of their own concernments, is an impregnable argument theſe laws could not take place among them, had they not been given by Moſes at the time of their unſettlement, and that their future ſettlement did depend upon their preſent obſervation of them; which is an evidence too that they could be of no leſs than Divine original: Which was more than I was to prove at preſent.

VII. Were not theſe writings undoubtedly Moſes's, whence ſhould the neighbour nations about the Jews, notwithſtanding the hatred of the Jewiſh religion, retain ſo venerable an opinion of the wiſdom of Moſes? The Egyptians accounted him one of their prieſts (which notes the eſteem they had of his learning), as appears by the teſtimonies produced out of Chæremon and Manetho, by Joſephus. Diodorus Siculus ſpeaks of him with great reſpect among the famous legiſlators; and ſo doth Strabo, who ſpeaks in commendation of the religion eſtabliſhed by him. The teſtimony of Longinus is ſufficiently known, that Moſes *was no man of any vulgar wit* (οὐκ ὁ τυχὼν ἀνὴρ). Chalcidius calls him *ſapientiſſimus Moſes*; although I muſt not diſſemble that Chalcidius hath been, I think, undeſervedly reckoned among Heathen writers, though he comments on Plato's Timæus, it being moſt probable that he was a Chriſtian Platoniſt, which might more probably make Vaninus call him *circumforaneum blateronem*. But though we exempt Chalcidius out of the number of thoſe Heathens who have borne teſtimony to the wiſdom of Moſes, yet there are number enough beſides him produced by Juſtin Martyr, Cyril, and others, whoſe evidence is clear and full to make us undoubtedly believe that there could never have been ſo univerſal and uninterrupted a tradition concerning the writings and

Joſeph. c. App. l. i. c. 31.
Diod. l. i. c. 94.
Strabo Geograph. 16. p. 524.
Longin. de Sublim. ſect. 9.
V. Voſſ. de Idol. l. ii. c. 45.
V. Grot. de Ver. Relig. Chr. l. ii.

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and laws of Moſes, had they not been certainly his, and conveyed down in a continual ſucceſſion from his time to our preſent age. Which will be yet more clear, if we conſider in the ſecond place, that the national conſtitution and ſettlement of the Jews did depend on the truth of the laws and writings of Moſes. Can we have more undoubted evidence that there were ſuch perſons as Solon, Lycurgus, and Numa, and that the laws bearing their names were theirs, than the hiſtory of the ſeveral commonwealths of Athens, Sparta, and Rome, who were governed by thoſe laws? When writings are not of general concernment, they may be more eaſily counterfeited; but when they concern the rights, privileges, and government of a nation, there will be enough whoſe intereſt will lead them to prevent impoſtures. It is no eaſy matter to forge a Magna Charta, and to invent laws. Men's caution and prudence is never ſo quickſighted, as in matters which concern their eſtates and freeholds. The general intereſt of men lies contrary to ſuch impoſtures, and therefore they will prevent their obtaining among them. Now the laws of Moſes are incorporated into the very republic of the Jews, and their ſubſiſtence and government depends upon them; their religion and laws are ſo interwoven one with the other, that one cannot be broken off from the other. Their right to their temporal poſſeſſions in the land of Canaan depends on their owning the ſovereignty of God, who gave them to them, and on the truth of the hiſtory recorded by Moſes, concerning the promiſes made to the Patriarchs. So that on that account it was impoſſible thoſe laws ſhould be counterfeit, on which the welfare of a nation depended, and according to which they were governed ever ſince they were a nation. So that I ſhall now take it to be ſufficiently proved, that the writings under the name of Moſes were undoubtedly his; for none, who acknowledge the laws to have been his, can have the face to deny the hiſtory, there being ſo

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neceſſary a connection between them; and the Book of Geneſis being nothing elſe but a general and very neceſſary introduction to that which follows. I deny not but the hiſtory of Moſes might, according to the tradition of the Jews, and the belief of others, be reviſed by Ezra, or the men of the great Synagogue, after the Jews' return from captivity, as appears by the names of places, and other paſſages not ſuitable to the time of Moſes: but I utterly deny that the Pentateuch was not of Moſes's penning, or that it was only a collection out of the diaries and annals of the nation: for throughout the Scripture the very hiſtorical paſſages are attributed to Moſes, and in all probability the Samaritan Pentateuch bears date before the Captivity; by which it ſtill appears that thoſe books are truly the books of Moſes.

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Moſes's certain Knowledge of what he writ.

I. *The third Hypotheſis concerns the Certainty of the Matter of Moſes's Hiſtory; that gradually proved: Firſt,* Moſes's *Knowledge cleared, by his Education, and Experience, and certain Information.* II. *His Education in the Wiſdom of* Egypt; *what that was.* III. *The old* Egyptian *Learning enquired into;* IV. *The Conveniences for it.* V. *Of the* Egyptian *Prieſts.* Moſes *reckoned among them for his Knowledge.* VI. *The mathematical, natural, divine, and moral Learning of* Egypt. VII. *Their political Wiſdom moſt conſiderable.* VIII. *The Advantage of* Moſes *above the* Greek *Philoſophers, as to Wiſdom and Reaſon.* Moſes *himſelf an Eye-witneſs of moſt of his Hiſtory:* IX. *The certain uninterrupted Tradition of the other Part among the* Jews, *manifeſted by rational Evidence.*

HAVING thus far cleared our way, we come to the third hypotheſis, which is, *There are as manifeſt proofs of the undoubted truth and certainty of the hiſtory recorded by Moſes, as any can be given concerning any thing which we yield the firmeſt aſſent unto.* Here it muſt be conſidered that we proceed in a way of rational evidence to prove the truth of the thing in hand; as to which, if in the judgment of impartial perſons the arguments produced be ſtrong enough to convince an unbiaſſed mind, it is not material whether every wrangling atheiſt will ſit down contented with them: for uſually perſons of that inclination, rather than judgment, are more reſolved againſt light, than inquiſitive after it, and rather ſeek to ſtop the chinks at which any light might come in, than open the windows for the free and cheerful entertainment

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of it. It will certainly be ſufficient to make it appear that no man can deny the truth of that part of Scripture which we are now ſpeaking of, without offering manifeſt violence to his own faculties, and making it appear to the world that he is one wholly forſaken of his own reaſon; which will be ſatisfactorily done, if we can clear theſe things: Firſt, that it was morally impoſſible Moſes ſhould be ignorant of the things he undertook to write of, and ſo be deceived himſelf. Secondly, that it was utterly impoſſible he ſhould have any deſign in deceiving others in reporting it. Thirdly, that it is certain from all rational evidence that he hath not deceived the world, but that his hiſtory is undoubtedly true. Firſt, that it was morally impoſſible Moſes ſhould be deceived himſelf, or be ignorant of the things which he writ of. Two things are requiſite to prevent a man's being deceived himſelf. Firſt, that he be a perſon of more than ordinary judgment, wiſdom, and knowledge. Secondly, that he have ſufficient information concerning the things he undertakes to write of. If either of theſe two be wanting, it is poſſible for a man of integrity to be deceived; for an honeſt heart hath not always an Urim and Thummim upon it; nor is fidelity always furniſhed with the acuteſt intellectuals. The ſimplicity of the dove is as liable to be deceived itſelf, as the ſubtlety of the ſerpent is to deceive others; but where the wiſdom of the ſerpent is to prevent being deceived, and the dove's innocency in not deceiving others, there are all the qualifications can be deſired in any one who undertakes only to tell the truth. Firſt, then, that Moſes was a perſon of a great underſtanding, and ſufficiently qualified to put a difference between truth and falſehood, will appear, firſt, from the ingenuity of his education; ſecondly, from the ripeneſs of his judgment, and greatneſs of his experience when he penned theſe things.

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Firſt, we begin with his education. And here we require at preſent no further aſſent to be given to what is reported concerning Moſes in Scripture, than what we give to Plutarch's Lives, or any other relations concerning the actions of perſons who lived in former ages. Two things then we find recorded in Scripture concerning Moſes's education; *That he was brought up in the court of Egypt*, and *that he was ſkilled in all the learning of the Egyptians*; and theſe two will abundantly prove the ingenuity of his education, viz. that he was a perſon both converſant in civil affairs, and acquainted with the abſtruſer parts of all the Egyptian wiſdom. Heb. xi. 25. Acts vii. 22.

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And I confeſs there is nothing to me which doth advance ſo much the repute of the ancient Egyptian learning, as that the Spirit of God in Scripture ſhould take ſo much notice of it, as to ſet forth a perſon (otherwiſe renowned for greater accompliſhments) by his ſkill in this. For if it be below the wiſdom of any ordinary perſon to ſet forth a perſon by that which in itſelf is no matter of commendation, how much leſs can we imagine it of that infinite wiſdom which inſpired Stephen, in that apology which he makes for himſelf againſt the Libertines, who charged him with contempt of Moſes and the law? And therefore certainly this was ſome very obſervable thing, which was brought in as a ſingular commendation of Moſes, by that perſon whoſe deſign was to make it appear how high an eſteem he had of him. And hence it appears that learning is not only in itſelf a great accompliſhment of human nature, but that it ought to be looked upon with veneration, even in thoſe who have excellencies of a higher nature to commend them. If a pearl retains its excellency when it lies upon a dunghill, it can certainly loſe nothing of its luſtre by being ſet in a crown of gold. If learning be commendable in an Egyptian, it is no leſs in Moſes, where it is enamelled with more noble perfections than of itſelf it can reach unto. All the queſtion

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queſtion is, whether the ancient learning of the Egyptians was ſuch as might be ſuppoſed to improve the reaſon and underſtanding of men to ſuch an height, as thereby to make them more capable of putting a difference between truth and falſehood? Whether it were ſuch an overflowing Nilus as would enrich the underſtandings of all thoſe who were in a capacity to receive its ſtreams? The truth is, there want not grounds of ſuſpicion that the old Egyptian learning was not of that elevation which the preſent diſtance of our age makes us apt to think it was. And a learned man hath in a ſet diſcourſe endeavoured to ſhew the great defects that there were in it. Neither can it, I think, be denied, but, according to the reports we have now concerning it, ſome parts of their learning were frivolous, others obſcure, a great deal magical, and the reſt ſhort of that improvement which the acceſſion of the parts, and induſtry of after-ages, gave unto it. But yet it is again as evident, that ſome parts of learning were invented by the Egyptians, others much improved, and that the Greeks did at firſt ſet up with the ſtock they borrowed out of Egypt; and that learning chiefly flouriſhed there, when there was (I had almoſt ſaid) an Egyptian darkneſs of ignorance overſpreading the face of Greece, as well as other nations.

Conring. de Hermet. Medic. c. 10, 11, 12.

III. Which will appear by theſe conſiderations: The great antiquity of their repute for learning; the great advantages they had for promoting it; and the parts of learning moſt in uſe among them. This, though it may ſeem a digreſſion here, will yet tend to promote our deſign, by ſhewing thereby how qualified and accompliſhed Moſes was to deliver to the world an hiſtory of ancient times. If we believe Macrobius, there was no people in the world could vie for learning with the Egyptians; who makes Egypt in one place *the mother of all arts*, and in another, the Egyptians, *omnium philoſophiæ diſciplinarum parentes*, *the*

Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 15. in Somn. Scip. l. i. c. 19.

the fathers of all the philoſophic ſciences. He derives elſewhere the original of all *aſtronomy* from them, *quos conſtat primos omnium cœlum metiri, & ſcrutari auſos*; Ibid. c. 21. though it be more probable that the nativity even of aſtronomy itſelf was firſt calculated by the Chaldæans, from whom it was conveyed to the Egyptians. He likewiſe appropriates all divine knowledge to them, where he ſaith they were *ſoli rerum divinarum conſcii*; Id. Saturn. l. i. c. 14. l. vii. c. 13. and after calls Egypt *divinarum omnium diſciplinarum compotem.* It is ſufficiently notorious what great repute the Egyptian learning hath been in with ſome in our latter times; in that our chymiſts look upon it as the greateſt honour to their profeſſion, that they think they can claim kindred of the old Egyptian learning, and derive the pedigree of their chymiſtry from the old Egyptian Hermes. But that vain pretence is ſufficiently refuted by the fore-mentioned learned man Conringius, in his tract on this ſubject, *de Hermetica Medicina.* Franciſcus Patricius profeſſeth himſelf ſo great an admirer of the old Egyptian learning, that he thought it would be no bad exchange, if the Peripatetic philoſophy were extruded, and the old Egyptian received inſtead of it. But the world is now grown wiſer than to receive his Hermes Triſmegiſtus for the author of the old Egyptian philoſophy, the credit of his author being for ever blaſted, and the doctrine contained in the books under his name manifeſted to be a mere *cento*; a confuſed mixture of the Chriſtian, Platonic, and Egyptian doctrine together: ſo that we could hardly maintain the juſtneſs of the repute of the ancient Egyptian learning from any thing now extant of it; but yet we ſee no reaſon to queſtion it, eſpecially ſince it is ſo honourably ſpoken of in ſacred writ, and ſeems in it to have been made the ſtandard and meaſure of human wiſdom. For which we have this obſervable teſtimony, that when the wiſdom of Solomon is ſpoken of with the greateſt advantage and commendation, it is ſet forth with this character,

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that it exceeded the wiſdom of all the children of the Eaſt country, and all the wiſdom of Egypt. Whence it is moſt natural and eaſy to argue, that certainly their learning muſt be accounted the greateſt at that time in the world, or elſe it could not have been inferred that Solomon was wiſer than all men, becauſe his wiſdom excelled theirs, unleſs we ſuppoſe their wiſdom to have been the greateſt in that age of the world, when the wiſdom of the Grecians (although in that time Homer is ſuppoſed to flouriſh) was not thought worthy the taking notice of. We ſee from hence then, as from an irrefragable teſtimony, that the wiſdom of the Egyptians anciently was no trivial *pedantry*, nor mere ſuperſtitious and magical rites, but that there was ſomething in it ſolid and ſubſtantial, or it had not been worth triumphing over by the wiſdom of Solomon: it being true of that, what Lipſius ſaith of the Roman empire, *quicquid dignum vinci videbatur, vicit; cætera non tam non potuit quam contempſit*; it was an argument of ſome great worth, that it was overtopped and conquered by it.

1 Kings iv. 29, 30, 31.

Lipſius de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 3.

IV. Thus we ſee how juſt the repute of the ancient Egyptian learning is from teſtimony; and we ſhall find as great reaſon for it, when we conſider the great advantages the Egyptians had for promoting of learning among them. Two ways men come to knowledge; either by tradition from others, or by obſervation of their own: what the Egyptians had the firſt way, will be ſpoken to afterwards; we now conſider the latter of theſe. All knowledge ariſing from obſervation, muſt be either of thoſe ſciences which immediately conduce to the benefit of men's lives, or ſuch whoſe end is to improve men's rational faculties in the knowledge of things. The former neceſſity will put men upon the finding out; the latter require *feceſſum & otia*, freedom from other employments, a mind addicted to them, and induſtry in the ſtudy of them, and a care to preſerve their inventions in them. The ſtudy of geometry, among the Egyptians,

Vid. Ariſt. Metaph. 1. l. c. 1.

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tians, owed its original to neceſſity; for the river Nile being ſwelled with the ſhowers falling in Ethiopia, and thence annually overflowing the country of Egypt, and by its violence overturning all the marks they had to diſtinguiſh their lands, made it neceſſary for them, upon every abatement of the flood, to ſurvey their lands, to find out every one his own by the quantity of the ground upon the ſurvey; the neceſſity of which put them upon a more diligent enquiry into that ſtudy, that thereby they might attain to ſome exactneſs in that, which was to be of ſuch neceſſary, conſtant, and perpetual uſe. Thence we find the invention of geometry particularly attributed by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and others, to the Egyptians. This ſkill of theirs they after improved into a greater benefit, viz. the conveying the water of Nile into thoſe places where it had not overflown to ſo great a height, as to give them hopes of an enſuing plenty; which they did by the artificial cutting of ſeveral channels for that end; wherein, ſaith Strabo, the Egyptians' *art and induſtry outwent nature itſelf*. By this likewiſe they obſerved the height of the overflowing of the river, whereby they knew what harveſt to expect the following year; which they did by a well near Memphis (from the uſe of it called Νειλομέτριον); upon the walls of which were the marks of ſeveral cubits, which they obſerve and publiſh it to all, that they might provide themſelves accordingly. We ſee what grounds there are, even from profit and advantage, to make us believe that the Egyptians were ſkilled in geometry, and the knowledge relating thereto.

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Herodot. lib. ii. c. 109. Diod. l. i. Strabo, l. 17. Cæl. Rhod. l. xviii. c. 34.

Strabo. l. xvii. p. 787.

V. And for the promoting of all other knowledge, whoſe end is contemplation, the very conſtitution of their commonwealth did much conduce thereto; for thereby it was provided that there ſhould always be a ſufficient number of perſons freed from all other employments, who might devote themſelves to a ſedulous enquiry into the natures of things. Such were the

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the Egyptian Priests, who, by the peculiar nature of the Egyptian superstitions, were freed from that burdensome service of sacrificing beasts, which the priests of other nations were continually employed about, and so they enjoyed not only an easy, but a very honourable employment; for they were the persons of the greatest honour, esteem, and authority among the Egyptians; of which rank, as far as I can find, all were accounted, who were not soldiers, husbandmen, or artificers. For Strabo mentions no nobility at all in Egypt distinct from the priests; for he divides the whole commonwealth into soldiers, husbandmen, and priests. And telling us that the other two were employed about matters of war, and the king's revenues in peace, he adds, οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς καὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἤσκων καὶ ἀστρονομίαν, ὁμιληταί τε τῶν βασιλέων ἦσαν, *The priests minded the study of philosophy and astronomy, and conversed most with their kings.* And after, speaking of their kings being studied in their arts, as well as others of the priests, he adds, μεθ' ὧν ἦν αὐτοῖς πλείων ὁ βίος, *with whom they spent most of their lives.* Agreeably to this, Plutarch tells us, that the kings themselves were often priests; and adds out of Hecatæus, that the kings used to drink wine by measure, ἱερεῖς ὄντες, *because they were priests*; for, as he saith, the kings of Egypt were chosen either out of the rank of priests or soldiers, τὸ μὲν δι' ἀνδρείαν, τὸ δὲ διὰ σοφίαν γένους ἀξίωμα καὶ τιμὴν ἔχοντος· *those two orders being of the greatest honour, the one for valour, and the other for wisdom*; and if the king were chosen out of the soldiers, he was presently entered among the priests, to learn their mystical sciences. Diodorus seems to reckon some great persons after the priests, and distinct from the soldiery; but if he means by these any other than some of the other two professions, I must say, as Casaubon doth in another case of Diodorus, *Sane Strabonis auctoritas multis siculis apud me prævalet*; *Diodorus's testimony is not to be weighed with Strabo's.* From whence we may understand the reason why that Potipherah,

Strab. l. xvii. p. 787.

Plutarch. de Isid. & Osir. c. 9. Edit. Oxon.

Diod. l. i.

Casaub. Not. in Strab. l. xvii.

tipherah, whoſe daughter Joſeph married, is called כהן, which ſome render the *Prieſt*, others the *Prince of On*; but theſe two we ſee are very conſiſtent, their prieſts being their great princes, and Heliopolis, or On, of which Potipherah was prince or prieſt, being the chief ſeat and univerſity of the prieſts of Egypt. Now it is evident from Clemens Alexandrinus, that the Egyptians did not communicate their myſteries promiſcuouſly to all, but only to ſuch as were in ſucceſſion to the crown, or elſe to thoſe of the prieſts and their children, who were moſt apt and fit for them, both by their diet, inſtruction, and family. For this was unalterably obſerved among them, that there was a continued ſucceſſion of a profeſſion in their ſeveral families, both of prieſts, ſoldiers, and huſbandmen, whereby they kept their ſeveral orders without any mixture or confuſion; which is confeſſed both by Herodotus and Diodorus: ſo that by this conſtitution learning was among them confined to the prieſts, which highly advanceth the probability of that tradition preſerved among the Egyptians concerning Moſes (which likewiſe ſtrongly proves our preſent deſign), viz. Manetho's records, as Joſephus tells us, that Moſes was one of the prieſts at Heliopolis, and that his name among them was Oſarſiphus, who changing his name, was called Moſes, and in the time of Amenophis conducted the leprous people out of Egypt (ſo the Egyptians, out of their hatred of the Iſraelites, call them). And Chæremon, another Egyptian prieſt in the ſame author, calls Moſes a ſcribe, and Joſeph (by whom probably he means Joſhua) a ſacred ſcribe; and ſaith that the Egyptian name of Moſes was Tiſithen, and of Joſeph, Poteſeph. Now this tradition did in all probability ariſe from the repute of Moſes's learning and wiſdom, which being among them proper to their prieſts, they thence aſcribed that name to him; although probably he might come to the knowledge of all their myſteries

Gen. xli. 45.

Clem. Alex. Strom. l. v.

Herodot. l. ii. c. 37. Diod. l. i. c. 73.

Joſeph. l. i. c. 26. c. App. Edit. Oxon.

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myſteries from the relation he had to Pharaoh's daughter.

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We come now to conſider the parts of the Egyptian learning, in which the Scripture tells us Moſes was ſkilled. This by Philo Judæus is branched into *arithmetic*, *geometry*, *muſic*, and *hieroglyphical philoſophy*; but Sixtus Senenſis, more comprehenſively, from Diodorus, Diogenes Laertius, and others, divides it into four parts, *mathematical*, *natural*, *divine*, and *moral*. Their ſkill in the mathematical parts of learning hath been partly ſhewed already, and might be more largely, from that ſkill in them which the Grecians gained from the Egyptians; as both Iamblichus and Porphyry ſpeak of Pythagoras, that he gained his ſkill in geometry chiefly from the Egyptians: for theſe, as Porphyry ſaith, of a long time had been very ſtudious of geometry, as the Phœnicians of arithmetic, and the Chaldæans of aſtronomy. But Iamblichus (and I think deſervedly) takes notice of the τὸ δυσπροσδεκτὸν, the *difficult acceſs* of the Egyptian prieſts, eſpecially as to acquaintance with their myſteries; and ſo Strabo calls them, μυσικὰς καὶ δυσμεταδότους, ſuch who concealed their learning under many ſymbols, and were not eaſily drawn to unfold it. And yet we might think the two-and-twenty years time, which Pythagoras is thought to have ſpent among them, had been enough to have inſinuated himſelf into their utmoſt acquaintance, and to have drawn from them the knowledge of their greateſt myſteries: but yet we have no great reaſon to think he did, if we believe the ſtory in Diogenes Laertius, of his ſacrificing an hecatomb for the finding out that demonſtr tion, which is now contained in the forty-ſeventh propoſition of the firſt of Euclid. Yet this did not abate the Grecians' eſteem of the Egyptians' mathematical learning; for in Plato's time Eudoxus Cnidius went into Egypt on purpoſe to acquire it; and Democritus's boaſt, that none of the Arſepedonaptæ in Egypt

Philo Jud. de Vita Moſis, tom. ii. p. 84. Ed. Mangey.

Sixt. Senen. l. ii. p. 39.

Iambl. de Vita Pyth. l. i. 29. Ed. Kuſter.

Porphyr. de vit. Pyth. p. 4. Ed. Rom.

Strab. l. xvii. p. 806.

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(ſo their prieſts were called, as Clemens Alexandrinus and Euſebius tell us, who relate the ſtory) exceeded him in the mathematics, proves at leaſt inferred, that they were then in greateſt eſteem for them. Their great ſkill in aſtronomy is atteſted by Diodorus, Strabo, Herodotus, and others, and by their finding out the courſe of the year by the motion of the ſun; which was the invention of the Heliopolitan prieſts. How much they valued geography, appears from Clemens's deſcription of the Ἱερογραμματεὺς, or *ſacred ſcribe*, in the ſolemn proceſſion; for he was required to be ſkilful in hieroglyphics, coſmography, geography, the motions of the planets, the chorography of Egypt, and deſcription of the Nile. Euſtathius, in his notes on Dionyſius, attributes the invention of geographical tables to Seſoſtris, who cauſed the lands he had conquered to be deſcribed in tables, and ſo communicated to the Egyptians, and from them to others. Their ſkill in natural philoſophy could not be very great, becauſe of their magic and ſuperſtition, whereby they were hindered from all experiments in thoſe natural things, which they attributed a divinity to: but they ſeem to have been more exact and curious in natural hiſtory; for any prodigies, or any thing that was anomalous in nature, they did, ſaith Strabo, φιλοπραγμονέστερον ἀναφέρειν εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα, *with a great deal of curioſity inſert in their ſacred records*; and Herodotus adds, *that more things of that nature are obſerved by them than by any other nation*; which, ſaith he, they not only diligently preſerve, but frequently compare together, and from a ſimilitude of prodigies gather a ſimilitude of events. But that which gained the Egyptians the greateſt repute abroad, ſeems to have been their early ſkill in phyſic, which is ſo much ſpoken of by Homer, Plato, Herodotus, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, and others, that it were impertinent troubling a reader's patience with the proof of that which is ſo generally confeſſed. A great evidence of the antiquity of this ſtudy among them is

Clem. Al. Strom. l. i. p. 357. Euſ. Præp. l. x. c. 4. Diodor. l. i. c. 49, 50. Strab. l. xvii. p. 541. Herodot. l. ii. c. 4. Clemens Strom. l. vi. p. 757. Ed. Oxon.

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(if Manetho may be ſo far credited) that Athotis, the ſecond king of the firſt dynaſty of the Thinites, was a phyſician himſelf, and writ ſome books of anatomy; and the ſecond king of the third dynaſty of the Memphites was, for his ſkill in phyſic, honoured among them by the name of Æſculapius. Pliny affirms it to have been the cuſtom of their kings to cauſe dead bodies to be diſſected, to find out the nature of diſeaſes; and elſewhere tells us, that the original of phyſic among them was from the relations of thoſe who by any remedy were cured of any diſeaſe, which for a memorial to poſterity were recorded in their temples. Their hieroglyphical and myſtical learning hath made the greateſt noiſe in the world, and hath the leaſt of ſubſtance in it; which, whoever will not be convinced of without peruſal of Kircher's Oedipus Ægyptiacus, will at laſt find it fully done to his hand by the ſucceſsleſs endeavours of that otherwiſe learned man. I cannot think any rational man could think that ſtudy worth his pains, which at the higheſt can amount but to a conjecture; and when it is come to that with a great deal of pains, it is nothing but ſome ordinary and trivial obſervation. As in that famous hieroglyphic of Dioſpolis, ſo much ſpoken of by the ancients, where was a child to expreſs coming into the world, an old man for going out of it, an hawk for God, an hippopotamus for hatred, and a crocodile for impudence; and all to expreſs this venerable apophthegm, *O ye that come into the world, and that go out of it, God hates impudence.* And therefore certainly this kind of learning deſerves the higheſt form among the *difficiles nugæ*; and all theſe hieroglyphics put together will make but one good one, and that ſhould be for *labour loſt*.

Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. xix. c. 26. l. xxix. c. 1.

VII. There is yet one part of learning more among them which the Egyptians are eſteemed for; which is the political and civil part of it, which may better be called wiſdom than moſt of the foregoing. Two things ſpeak much the wiſdom of a nation; good laws,

laws, and a prudent management of them. Their laws are highly commended by Strabo and Diodorus; and it is none of the leaſt commendations of them, that Solon and Lycurgus borrowed ſo many of their conſtitutions from them: and for the prudent management of their government, as the continuance of their ſtate ſo long in peace and quietneſs is an invincible demonſtration of it, ſo the report given of them in Scripture adds a further teſtimony to it; for therein the king of Egypt is called the Son of the Wiſe, as well as the ſon of ancient kings; and his counſellors are called *wiſe counſellors of Pharaoh*, and the *wiſe men*; whereby a more than ordinary prudence and policy muſt be underſtood. Can we now imagine ſuch a perſon as Moſes was, bred up in all the ingenuous literature of Egypt, converſant among their wiſeſt perſons in Pharaoh's court, having thereby all advantages to improve himſelf, and to underſtand the utmoſt of all that they knew, ſhould not be able to paſs a judgment between a mere pretence and impoſture, and real and important truths? Can we think that one who had intereſt in ſo great a court, all advantages of raiſing himſelf therein, ſhould willingly forſake all the pleaſures and delights at preſent, all his hopes and advantages for the future, were he not fully perſuaded of the certain and undoubted truth of all thoſe things which are recorded in his books? Is it poſſible a man of ordinary wiſdom ſhould venture himſelf upon ſo hazardous, unlikely, and dangerous employment, as that was which Moſes undertook, which could have no probability of ſucceſs, but only upon the belief that that God who appeared unto him, was greater than all the Gods of Egypt, and could carry on his deſign by his power, maugre all the oppoſition which the princes of the world could make againſt it? And what poſſible ground can we have to think that ſuch a perſon, who did verily believe the truth of what God revealed unto him, ſhould dare to write any otherwiſe than as it was re-

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Iſa. xix. 11, 12.

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vealed unto him? If there had been any thing repugnant to common reaſon in the hiſtory of the creation, the fall of man, the univerſal deluge, the propagation of the world by the ſons of Noah, the hiſtory of the patriarchs, had not Moſes rational faculties as well as we? Nay, had he them not far better improved than any of ours are? And was not he then able to judge what was ſuitable to reaſon and what not? And can we think he would then deliver any thing inconſiſtent with reaſon, or undoubted tradition then, when the Egyptian prieſts might ſo readily and plainly have triumphed over him, by diſcovering the falſehood of what he wrote? Thus we ſee that Moſes was as highly qualified as any of the acuteſt Heathen philoſophers could be, for diſcerning truth from falſehood; nay, in all probability he far excelled the moſt renowned of the Grecian philoſophers in that very kind of learning wherewith they made ſo great noiſe in the world, which was originally Egyptian, as is evident in the whole ſeries of the Grecian philoſophers, who went age after age to Egypt to get ſome ſcraps of that learning there which Moſes could not have but full meals of, becauſe of his high place, great intereſt, and power in Egypt. And muſt thoſe hungry philoſophers then become the only maſters of our reaſon, and their dictates be received as the ſenſe and voice of nature, which they either received from uncertain tradition, or elſe delivered in oppoſition to it, that they might be more taken notice of in the world? Muſt an αὐτὸς ἔφα be confronted with, *Thus ſaith the Lord?* and a few pitiful ſymbols vie authority with divine commands? and *Ex nihilo nihil fit* be ſooner believed than *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth?* What irrefragable evidence of reaſon is that ſo confident a preſumption built upon, when it can ſignify nothing without this hypotheſis, that there is nothing but matter in the world? And let this firſt be proved, and we will never ſtick to grant the other. I may confidently

confidently ſay, the great gullery of the world hath been, taking philoſophical dictates for the ſtandard of reaſon, and unproved hypotheſes for certain foundations for our diſcourſe to rely upon. And the ſeeking to reconcile the myſteries of our faith to theſe, hath been that which hath almoſt deſtroyed it, and turned our religion into a mere philoſophical ſpeculation. But of this elſewhere. We ſee then, that, inſiſting merely on the accompliſhment and rational perfections of the perſons who ſpeak, we have more reaſon to yield credit to Moſes in his hiſtory, than to any philoſophers in their ſpeculations. CHAP. II.

VIII. And that which in the next place ſpeaks Moſes to be a perſon of wiſdom, and judgment, and ability to find out truth, was his age and experience when he delivered theſe things to the world. He vented no crude and indigeſted conceptions, no ſudden and temerarious fancies; the uſual iſſues of teeming and juvenile wits: he lived long enough to have experience to try, and judgment to diſtinguiſh, a mere outſide and varniſh from what was ſolid and ſubſtantial. We cannot then have the leaſt ground of ſuſpicion that Moſes was any ways unfit to diſcern truth from falſehood; and therefore was capable of judging the one from the other.

But though perſons be never ſo highly accompliſhed for parts, learning, and experience, yet if they want due information of the certainty of the things they deliver, they may be ſtill deceived themſelves; and if they preſerve it for poſterity, be guilty of deceiving others. Let us now therefore ſee whether Moſes had not as great advantages for underſtanding the truth of his hiſtory, as he had judgment to diſcern it. And concerning all thoſe things contained in the four laſt books of his, to his own death, it was impoſſible any ſhould have greater than himſelf, writing nothing but what he was *pars magna* himſelf of, what he ſaw, and heard, and did. And can any

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BOOK II. teſtimony be deſired greater than his whoſe actions they were, or who was preſent at the doing of them; and that not in any private way, but in the moſt public capacity? For although private perſons may be preſent at great actions, yet they may be guilty of miſrepreſenting them, for want of underſtanding all circumſtances precedent and ſubſequent, or for want of underſtanding the deſigns of the chief inſtruments of action: but when the perſon himſelf, who was the chief in all, ſhall undertake to write an exact hiſtory of it, what evidence can be deſired more certain than that is, that there could be no defect as to information concerning what was done? The only ſcruple then that can be made, muſt be concerning the paſſages of former times which Moſes relates. And here I doubt not but to make it appear, that, inſiſting only on all that can be deſired in a bare hiſtorian (ſetting aſide divine revelation), he had as true and certain information of the hiſtory of thoſe former ages, as any one can have of things at that diſtance from themſelves; and that is, by a certain uninterrupted tradition of them, which will appear more clear and evident in that nation of which Moſes was, than in any other nation in the world; and that on theſe two accounts: Firſt, *The undoubted lineal deſcent from father to ſon in the Jewiſh nation.* Secondly, *Their intereſt lying ſo much in the preſerving this tradition entire.*

IX. Firſt, *That there was a certain unmixed lineal deſcent from father to ſon in the Jewiſh nation.* The great cauſe of moſt of the confuſion in the tradition of other nations, was the frequent mixing of ſeveral families one with another; now that God might, as it were, on purpoſe ſatisfy the world of the Iſraelites' capacity to preſerve the tradition entire, he prohibited their mixture by marriages with the people of other nations and families. So that in Moſes's time it was a very eaſy matter to run up their lineal deſcent as far as the flood,

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flood, nay, up to Adam; for Adam converſed ſometimes with Lamech, Noah's father; for Lamech was born A. M. 874. Adam died 930; ſo that fifty-ſix years, according to that computation, were Adam and Lamech contemporary. Can we then think Noah ignorant of the ancient tradition of the world, when his father was ſo long coævous with Adam; and Mathuſelah his grandfather, who was born A. M. 687, died not till A. M. 1656, according to our moſt learned primate of Armagh, i. e. was 600 years contemporary with Noah. Sem his ſon was probably living in ſome part of Jacob's time, or Iſaac's at leaſt; and how eaſily and uninterruptedly might the general tradition of the ancient hiſtory be continued thence to the time of Moſes, when the number of families agreeing in this tradition was increaſed, and withal incorporated by a common ligament of religion! I demand then, where can we ſuppoſe any ignorance, or cutting off this general tradition, in ſo continued a ſucceſſion as here was? Can we imagine that the grand-children of Jacob could be ignorant of their own pedigree, and whence they came into Egypt? Can we think a thing ſo late and ſo remarkable as the account of their coming thither ſhould be forgotten, which was attended with ſo many memorable circumſtances; eſpecially the ſelling and advancement of Joſeph, whoſe memory it was impoſſible ſhould be obliterated in ſo ſhort a time? Could Jacob be ignorant of the country whence his grandfather Abraham came; eſpecially when he lived ſo long in it himſelf, and married into that branch of the family that was remaining there, when he had ſerved his uncle Laban? Could Abraham, when he was contemporary with Sem, be ignorant of the truth of the flood, when Sem, from whom he derived himſelf, was one of the perſons who eſcaped it in the ark? Could Sem be ignorant of the actions before the flood, when Adam, the firſt man,

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lived ſo near the time of Noah? And could Noah then be ignorant of the creation and the fall of man? Thus we ſee it almoſt impoſſible that any age among them then could be ignorant of the paſſages of the precedent, which they were ſo few generations removed from, that they could with eaſe derive themſelves from the firſt man. What then can we ſay? that any of theſe had a deſign of deceiving their poſterity, and ſo corrupted the tradition? Beſides, that it could be hardly poſſible at that time, when there were ſo many remaining teſtimonies of former times. What end can we imagine that any parents ſhould have in thus deceiving their children? or what advantage ſhould come to them by ſuch a deceit? Nay, I ſhall now manifeſt in the ſecond place, that the whole intereſt of their children lay in preſerving this tradition certain and entire. For their hopes of poſſeſſing Canaan, and title to it, depended upon the promiſe made unto Abraham 400 years before; which would not only keep awake their ſenſe of Divine Providence, but would make them careful during their bondage to preſerve their genealogies; becauſe all the right they could plead to their poſſeſſions in Canaan, was from their being of Abraham's ſeed. And beſides this, on purpoſe to be a memorial to them of paſſages between God and Abraham, they had in their fleſh a badge of circumciſion, which would ſerve to call to mind thoſe tranſactions which had been between God and their forefathers. Theſe things then do fully demonſtrate, that, inſiſting only on rational evidence, the Iſraelites were the moſt certain conſervators of the ancient hiſtory of the world; and can we then think that Moſes, who was the ruler among them, ſhould not fully underſtand thoſe things which every Iſraelite could ſcarce be ignorant of, and might correct the miſtakes of Moſes in his hiſtory, if he had been guilty of any ſuch? Theſe things I ſuppoſe have made the firſt propoſition evident,

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dent, that it was morally impoſſible Moſes ſhould be deceived himſelf, or be ignorant of the things which he reports to others; both becauſe he had abilities ſufficient to diſcover truth from falſehood, and ſufficient information of the paſſages of former times.

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CHAP. III.

Moſes's Fidelity and Integrity proved.

I. Moſes *conſidered as an Hiſtorian, and as a Lawgiver; his Fidelity in both proved; clear Evidences that he had no Intent to deceive in his Hiſtory, Freedom from private Intereſt, Impartiality in his Relations, Plainneſs and Perſpicuity of Stile.* II. *As a Lawgiver, he came armed with Divine Authority, which being the main Thing, is fixed on to be fully proved from his Actions and Writings.* III. *The Power of Miracles the great Evidence of Divine Revelation. Two grand Queſtions propounded. In what Caſes Miracles may be expected, and how known to be true. No Neceſſity of a conſtant Power of Miracles in a Church:* IV. *Two Caſes alone wherein they may be expected. When any Thing comes as a Law from God, and when a Divine Law is to be repealed. The Neceſſity of Miracles in thoſe Caſes as an Evidence of Divine Revelation aſſerted.* V, VI, VII. *Objections anſwered. No Uſe of Miracles when the Doctrine is ſettled, and owned by Miracles by the firſt Revelation. No Need of Miracles in Reformation of a Church.*

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THE ſecond propoſition contains the proof of Moſes's fidelity, that he was as far from having any intent to deceive others, as he was from being deceived himſelf. Two ways Moſes muſt be conſidered; as an hiſtorian, and as a lawgiver. The only inducement for him to deceive as an hiſtorian, muſt be ſome particular intereſt which muſt draw him aſide from an impartial delivery of the truth; as a lawgiver, he might deceive, if he pretended Divine revelation for thoſe laws which were only the iſſues of his own brain, that they might be received with a greater veneration among the people; as Numa Pompilius

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Pompilius and others did. Now if we prove that Moſes had no intereſt to deceive in his hiſtory, and had all rational evidence of Divine revelation in his laws, we ſhall abundantly evince the undoubted fidelity of Moſes, in every thing recorded by him. We begin then with his fidelity as an hiſtorian; and it being contrary to the common intereſt of the world to deceive and be deceived, we have no reaſon to entertain any ſuſpicions of the veracity of any perſon, where we cannot diſcern ſome peculiar intereſt that might have a ſtronger bias upon him than the common intereſt of the world. For it is otherwiſe in morals than in naturals; for in naturals we ſee that every thing will leave its proper intereſt to preſerve the common intereſt of nature; but in morals, there is nothing more common than deſerting the common intereſt of mankind, to ſet up a peculiar intereſt againſt it: it being the trueſt deſcription of a politician, that he is one who makes himſelf the centre, and the whole world his circumference; that he regards not how much the whole world is abuſed, if any advantage doth accrue to himſelf by it. Where we ſee it then the deſign of any perſon to advance himſelf or his poſterity, or to ſet up the credit of the nation whoſe hiſtory he writes, we may have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect his partiality; becauſe we then find a ſufficient inducement for ſuch a one to leave the common road of truth, and to fall into the paths of deceit. But we have not the leaſt ground to ſuſpect any ſuch partiality in the hiſtory of Moſes; for nothing is more clear than that he was free from the ambitious deſign of advancing himſelf and his poſterity, who, notwithſtanding the great honour he enjoyed himſelf, was content to leave his poſterity in the meaneſt ſort of attendance upon the tabernacle. And as little have we ground to think he intended to flatter that nation, which he ſo lively deſcribes, that one would think he had rather a deſign to ſet forth the frowardneſs, unbelief, unthankfulneſs, and diſobedience of a nation

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nation towards a gracious God, than any ways to enhance their reputation in the world, or to ingratiate himſelf with them by writing this hiſtory of them. Nay, and he ſets forth ſo exactly the leſſer failings and groſſer enormities of all the anceſtors of this nation whoſe acts he records, that any impartial reader will ſoon acquit him of a deſign of flattery, when, after he hath recorded thoſe faults, he ſeeks not to extenuate them, or bring any excuſe or pretence to palliate them. So that any obſerving reader may eaſily take notice that he was carried on by a higher deſign than the common people of hiſtorians are; and that his drift and ſcope was to exalt the goodneſs and favour of God towards a rebellious and obſtinate people: of which there can be no greater nor more lively demonſtration, than the hiſtory of all the tranſactions of the Jewiſh nation, from their coming forth of Egypt, to their utter ruin and deſolation.

Deut. vii. 7, 8. And Moſes tells them, as from God himſelf, *it was neither for their number, nor their goodneſs, that God ſet his love upon them, but he loved them becauſe he loved them*, i. e. no other account was to be given of his gracious dealing with them, but the freeneſs of his own bounty, and the exuberancy of his goodneſs towards them Nay, have we not cauſe to admire the ingenuity as well as veracity of this excellent perſonage, who not only lays ſo notorious a blot upon the ſtock of his own family Levi, recording ſo punctually the inhumanity and cruelty of him and Simeon in their dealings with the Sechemites, but likewiſe inſerts that curſe which was left upon their memory for it, by their own father at his deceaſe! And that he might not leave the leaſt ſuſpicion of partiality behind him, he hath not done as the ſtatuary did (who engraved his own name ſo artificially in the ſtatue of Jupiter, that one ſhould continue as long as the other): but what the other intended for the praiſe of his ſkill, Moſes hath done for his ingenuity, that he hath ſo interwoven the hiſtory of his own failings and diſobedience

Gen. xxxiv. 25. Gen. xlix. 5, 6, 7.

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disobedience with those of the nation, that his spots are like to continue as long as the whole web of his history is like to do. Had it been the least part of his design to have his memory preserved with a superstitious veneration among the Jews, how easy had it been for him to have left out any thing that might in the least entrench upon his reputation? But we find him very secure and careless in that particular; nay, on the other side, very studious and industrious in depressing the honour and deserts of men, and advancing the power and goodness of God. And all this he doth, not in an affected strain of rhetoric, whose proper work is *impetrare fidem mendacio*, and, as Tully somewhere confesseth, *to make things seem otherwise than they are*; but with that innate simplicity and plainness, and yet withal with that *imperatoria brevitas*, that majesty and authority, that it is thereby evident he sought not to court acceptance, but to demand belief; nor had any such pitiful design of pleasing his readers with some affected phrases, but thought that truth itself had presence enough with it to command the submission of our understandings to it. CHAP. III.

II. Especially when all these were delivered by such a one who came sufficiently armed with all motives of credibility and inducements to assent, by that evidence which he gave that he was no pretender to Divine revelation, but was really employed as a peculiar instrument of state under the God and Ruler of the whole world. Which if it be made clear, then all our further doubts must presently cease, and all impertinent disputes be silenced, when the Supreme Majesty appears empowering any person to dictate to the world the laws they must be governed by. For if any thing be repugnant to our rational faculties, that is, that God should dictate any thing but what is most certainly true, or that the Governor of the world should prescribe any laws but such as were most just and reasonable. If we suppose a God, we cannot

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cannot queſtion veracity to be one of his chiefeſt attributes; and that it is impoſſible the God of truth ſhould employ any, to reveal any thing as from him, but what was undoubtedly true. So that it were an argument of the moſt groſs and unreaſonable incredulity, to diſtruſt the certainty of any thing which comes to us with ſufficient evidence of Divine revelation; becauſe thereby we ſhew our diſtruſt of the veracity of God himſelf. All that we can deſire then, is only reaſonable ſatisfaction concerning the evidence of Divine revelation in the perſon whoſe words we are to credit; and this our gracious God hath been ſo far from denying men, that he hath given all rational evidence of the truth of it. For it implying no incongruity at all, to any notions of God or ourſelves, that God ſhould, when it pleaſes him, ſingle out ſome inſtrument to manifeſt his will to the world; our enquiry then leads us to thoſe things which may be proper notes and characters of ſuch a perſon who is employed on ſo high an embaſſy. And thoſe are chiefly theſe two: If his actions be ſuch as could not flow from the power of mere natural cauſes; and if the things he reveals be ſuch as could not proceed from any created underſtanding. Firſt then for his actions: theſe ſtriking moſt upon our outward ſenſes, when they are any thing extraordinary, do tranſmit along with the impreſſions of them to the underſtanding an high opinion of the perſon that doth them: whereas the mere height of knowledge, or profoundneſs of things diſcovered, can have no ſuch preſent power and influence upon any, but ſuch as are of more raiſed and inquiſitive minds: and the world is generally more apt to ſuſpect itſelf deceived with words, than it can be with actions; and hence miracles, or the doing of things above the reach of nature, hath been always embraced as the greateſt teſtimony of Divine authority and revelation. For which there is this evident reaſon, that the courſe of nature being ſettled by Divine power, and every thing

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thing acting there by the force of that power it received at first, it seems impossible that any thing should really alter the series of things, without the same power which at first produced them. This then we take for granted, that wherever such a power appears, there is a certain evidence of a Divine presence going along with such a person who enjoys it. And this is that which is most evident in the actions of Moses, both as to the miracles he wrought both in Egypt and the wilderness, and his miraculous deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt; this latter being as much above the reach of any merely civil power, as the other above natural. CHAP. III.

III. We therefore come to the rational evidence of that Divine authority whereby Moses acted, which may be gathered from that Divine power which appeared in his actions; which being a matter of so great weight and importance (it being one of the main bases whereon the evidence of Divine revelation, as to us, doth stand), and withal of so great difficulty and obscurity (caused through the preferring some parties in religion above the common interest of it), it will require more care and diligence to search what influence the power of miracles hath upon the proving the Divine commission of those who do them. Whether they are such undoubted credentials, that wherever they are produced we are presently to receive the persons who bring them, as extraordinary embassadors from heaven, employed on some peculiar message to the sons of men? For the full stating of this important question, two things must be cleared. First, In what cases miracles may be expected as credentials to confirm an immediate commission from heaven? Secondly, What rational evidences do attend those miracles, to assure us they are such as they pretend to be?

First, For the cases wherein these miracles are to be expected as inducements to, or confirmations of our faith, concerning the Divine employment of any persons

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persons in the world. And here I lay down this as a certain foundation, that a power of miracles is not constantly and perpetually necessary in all those who manage the affairs of heaven here on earth, or that act in the name of God in the world. When the doctrine of faith is once settled in sacred records, and the Divine revelation of that doctrine sufficiently attested by a power of miracles in the revealers of it, what imaginable necessity or pretext can there be contrived for a power of miracles, especially among such as already own the Divine revelation of the Scriptures? To make then a power of working miracles to be constantly resident in the Church of God, as one of the necessary notes and characters of it, is to put God upon that necessity which common nature is freed from, viz. of multiplying things without sufficient cause to be given for them; and to leave men's faith at a stand, when God hath given sufficient testimony for it to rely upon. It is a thing too common and easy to be observed, that some persons, out of their eagerness to uphold the interest of their own party, have been fain to establish it upon such grounds, which, when they are sufficiently searched to the bottom, do apparently undermine the common and sure foundations whereon the belief of our common Christianity doth mainly stand. It were easy to make a large discourse on this subject, whereby we may rip open the wounds that Christianity hath received, through the contentions of the several parties of it; but this imputation cannot with so much reason be fastened on any party, as that which is nailed to a pretended infallible chair: for which we need no other instance than this before us. For while the leaders of that party make a power of miracles to be a necessary note of the true Church, they unavoidably run men upon this dangerous precipice, not to believe any thing as a matter of faith, where they find not sufficient miracles to convince them that is the true Church which propounds it to them. Which necessarily

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ceſſarily follows from their acknowledged principles; for it being impoſſible, according to them, to believe any thing with a Divine faith but what is propounded by the Church as an infallible guide; and it being impoſſible to know which is this infallible guide, but by the notes and characters of it, and one of thoſe notes being a power of miracles, I cannot find out my guide but by this power; and this power muſt be preſent in the Church (for nothing of former ages concerning faith, as the miracles of Chriſt, his reſurrection, &c. is to be believed, but on the Church's account); and therefore where men do not find ſufficient conviction from preſent miracles to believe the Church to be an infallible guide, they muſt throw off all faith concerning the Goſpel; for as good never a whit, as never the better. And therefore it is no wonder atheiſm ſhould be ſo thriving a plant in Italy; nay under, if not within the walls of Rome itſelf, where inquiſitive perſons do daily ſee the jugglings and impoſtures of prieſts in their pretended miracles; and from thence are brought to look upon religion itſelf as a mere impoſture, and to think no Pope ſo infallible, as he that ſaid, *Quantum nobis profuit hæc de Chriſto fabula?* Such horrid conſequences do men drive others, if not bring themſelves to, when they employ their parts and induſtry rather to uphold a corrupt intereſt, than to promote the belief of the acknowledged principles of Chriſtian faith. But as long as we aſſert no neceſſity of ſuch a power of miracles to be the note of any true Church, nor any ſuch neceſſity of an infallible guide, but that the miracles wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles were ſufficient evidences of a Divine ſpirit in them; and that the Scriptures were recorded by them to be an infallible rule of faith; here we have more clear reaſon as to the primary motives and grounds of faith, and withal the infallible veracity of God in the Scriptures, as the laſt reſolution of faith. And while we aſſert ſuch an infallible rule of faith, delivered to

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IV. There are only these two cases then wherein miracles may justly and with reason be expected. First, When any person comes as by an extraordinary commission from God to the world, either to deliver some peculiar message, or to do some more than ordinary service. Secondly, When something that hath been before established by Divine law, is to be repealed, and some other way of worship established instead of it. First, When any comes upon an extraordinary message to the world, in the name of, and by commission from God, then it is but reason to require some more than ordinary evidence of such authority; because of the main importance of the duty of giving credit to such a person, and the great sin of being guilty of rejecting that Divine authority which appears in him. And in this case we cannot think that God would require it as a duty to believe, where he doth not give sufficient arguments for faith, nor that he will punish persons for such a fault, which an

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an invincible ignorance was the cauſe of. Indeed God doth not uſe to neceſſitate faith, as to the act of it; but he doth ſo clearly propound the object of it, with all arguments inducing to it, as may ſufficiently juſtify a believer's choice in point of reaſon and prudence, and may leave all unbelievers without excuſe. I cannot ſee what account a man can give to himſelf of his faith, much leſs what apology he can make to others for it, unleſs he be ſufficiently convinced in point of the higheſt reaſon that it was his duty to believe; and in order to that conviction, there muſt be ſome clear evidence given, that what is ſpoken hath the impreſs of Divine authority upon it. Now what convictions there can be to any ſober mind concerning Divine authority in any perſon, without ſuch a power of miracles going along with him, when he is to deliver ſome new doctrine to the world to be believed, I confeſs I cannot underſtand. For although I doubt not but wherever God doth reveal any thing to any perſon immediately, he gives demonſtrable evidence to the inward ſenſes of the ſoul, that it comes from himſelf; yet this inward ſenſe can be no ground to another perſon to believe his doctrine divine, becauſe no man can be a competent judge of the actings of another's ſenſes; and it is impoſſible to another perſon to diſtinguiſh the actings of the Divine Spirit from ſtrong impreſſions of fancy, by the force and energy of them. If it be ſaid, *That we are bound to believe thoſe who ſay they are fully ſatisfied of their Divine commiſſion*; I anſwer, firſt, This will expoſe us to all deluſions imaginable; for if we are bound to believe them becauſe they ſay ſo, we are bound to believe all which ſay ſo; and none are more confident pretenders to this than the greateſt deceivers, as the experience of our age will ſufficiently witneſs. Secondly, Men muſt neceſſarily be bound to believe contradictions; for nothing is more ordinary than for ſuch confident pretenders to a Divine Spirit to contradict one another; and it may

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Object.

Anſw.

BOOK II. be, the ſame perſon in a little time contradict himſelf: And muſt we ſtill be bound to believe all they ſay? If ſo, no philoſophers would be ſo much in requeſt as thoſe Ariſtotle diſputes againſt in his Metaphyſics, who thought a thing might be, and not be, at the ſame time. Thirdly, The ground of faith at laſt will be but a mere human teſtimony, as far as the perſon who is to believe is capable of judging of it. For the queſtion being, Whether the perſon I am to believe hath Divine authority for what he ſaith? what ground can I have to believe that he hath ſo? Muſt I take his bare affirmation for it? If ſo, then a mere human teſtimony muſt be the ground of Divine faith, and that which it is laſt reſolved into. If it be ſaid, *That I am to believe the Divine authority by which he ſpeaks, when he ſpeaks in the name of God*; I anſwer, the queſtion will again return, how I ſhall know he ſpeaks this from Divine authority? And ſo there muſt be a progreſs *in infinitum*, or founding Divine faith on a mere human teſtimony, if I am to believe Divine revelation merely on the account of the perſon's affirmation who pretends to it. For in this caſe it holds good, *Non apparentis & non exiſtentis eadem eſt ratio*; if he be divinely inſpired, and there be no ground inducing me to believe that he is ſo, I ſhall be excuſed if I believe him not, if my wilfulneſs and lazineſs be not the cauſe of my unbelief.

V. If it be ſaid, *That God will ſatisfy the minds of good men concerning the truth of Divine Revelation*; I grant it to be wonderfully true; but all the queſtion is *de modo*, how God will ſatisfy them? Whether merely by inſpiration of his own ſpirit in them, aſſuring them that it is God that ſpeaks in ſuch perſons; or by giving them rational evidence, convincing them of ſufficient grounds to believe it. If we aſſert the former way, we run into theſe inconveniences: Firſt, we make as immediate a revelation in all thoſe who believe, as in thoſe who are to reveal Divine truths to us; for there is a new revelation of an object

ject immediately to the mind, viz. *that such a person is inspired of God*, and is not after the common way of the Spirit's illumination in believers, which is by enlightening the faculty without the proposition of any new object, as it is in the work of grace. So that according to this opinion there must be immediate inspiration as to that act of faith whereby we believe any one to have been divinely inspired, and consequently to that whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God. Secondly, Doth not this make the fairest plea for men's unbelief? For I demand, Is it the duty of those who want that immediate illumination, to believe, or no? If it be not their duty, unbelief can be no sin to them; if it be a duty, it must be made known to be a duty; and how can that be made known to them to be a duty, when they want the only and necessary means of instruction in order to it? Will God condemn them for that, which it was impossible they should have, unless God gave it them? And how can they be left inexcusable, who want so much as rational inducements to faith? for of these I now speak, and not of efficacious persuasions of the mind, when there are rational arguments for faith propounded. But, lastly, I suppose the case will be cleared, when we take notice what course God hath always taken to give all rational satisfaction to the minds of men, concerning the persons whom he hath employed in either of the forementioned cases. First, for those who have been employed upon some special message and service for God, he hath sent them forth sufficiently provided with manifestations of the Divine power whereby they acted; as is most clear and evident in the present case of Moses, Exodus iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; where Moses puts the case to God, which we are now debating of. Supposing, saith he, that I should go to the Israelites, and tell them God had appeared to me, and sent me to deliver them; and they should say, God had not appeared unto me, how should I satisfy them? God

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BOOK II. doth not reject this objection of Moſes as favouring of unbelief, but preſently ſhews him how he ſhould ſatisfy them, by cauſing a miracle before his face, *turning his rod into a ſerpent*; and God gives this as the reaſon of it, verſe 5. *that they may believe that the Lord God of their Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* It ſeems God himſelf thought this would be the moſt pregnant evidence of God's appearing to him, if he wrought miracles before their faces. Nay, leſt they ſhould think one ſingle miracle was not ſufficient, God, in the immediate following verſes, adjoins two more, which he ſhould do in order to their ſatisfaction; and further, verſe 21. God gave him a charge to do all thoſe wonders before Pharaoh, which he had put into his hand: and accordingly we find Pharaoh preſently demanding a miracle of Moſes, Exodus vii. 9. which accordingly Moſes did in his preſence; though he might ſuppoſe Pharaoh's demand not to proceed from deſire of ſatisfaction, but from ſome hopes that, for want of it, he might have rendered his credit ſuſpected among the Iſraelites.

VI. Indeed, after God had delivered his people, and had ſettled them in a way of ſerving him according to the laws delivered by Moſes, which he had confirmed by unqueſtionable miracles among them, we find a caution, laid in by Moſes himſelf, againſt thoſe which ſhould pretend ſigns and wonders, to draw them off from the religion eſtabliſhed by the law of Moſes. And ſo likewiſe under the Goſpel, after that was eſtabliſhed by the unparalleled miracles of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, we find frequent cautions againſt being deceived by thoſe who came with pretences of doing great miracles. But this is ſo far from infringing the credibility of ſuch a teſtimony, which is confirmed by miracles, that it yields a ſtrong confirmation to the truth of what I now aſſert; for the doctrine is ſuppoſed to be already eſtabliſhed by miracles, according to which we are to judge of the ſpirits

Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

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ſpirits of ſuch pretenders. Now it ſtands to the greateſt reaſon, that, when a religion is once eſtabliſhed by uncontrouled miracles, we ſhould not hearken to every whiffling conjurer, that will pretend to do great feats, to draw us off from the truth eſtabliſhed. In which caſe, the ſureſt way to diſcover the impoſture is, to compare his pretended miracles with thoſe true and real ones which were done by Moſes and Chriſt; and the ground of it is, becauſe every perſon is no competent judge of the truth of a miracle; for the devil, by his power and ſubtlety, may eaſily deceive all ſuch as will be led by the noſe by him, in expectation of ſome wonders to be done by him: and therefore, as long as we have no ground to queſtion the certainty of thoſe miracles which were wrought by Chriſt or Moſes, I am bound to adhere to the doctrine eſtabliſhed by thoſe miracles, and to make them my rule of judging all perſons who ſhall pretend to work miracles. Becauſe, 1. I do not know how far God may give men over to be deceived by lying wonders, who will not receive the truth in the love of it; i. e. thoſe that think not the Chriſtian religion ſufficiently confirmed by the miracles wrought at the firſt promulgation of it. God in juſtice may permit the devil to go further than otherwiſe he could, and leave ſuch perſons to their own credulity, to believe every impoſture and illuſion of their ſenſes for true miracles. 2. That doctrine which was confirmed by undoubted miracles, hath aſſured us of the coming of lying wonders, whereby many ſhould be deceived. Now this part of the doctrine of the Goſpel is as certainly true as any of the reſt, for it was confirmed by the ſame miracles that the other was; and beſides that, the very coming of ſuch miracles is an evidence of the truth of it, it falling out ſo exactly according to what was foretold ſo many hundred years ſince. Now if this doctrine be true, then am I certain the intent of theſe miracles is to deceive, and that thoſe are deceived who

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BOOK II. hearken to them; and what reaſon then have I to believe them? 3. To what end do theſe miracles ſerve? Are they to confirm the truths contained in Scripture? But what need they any confirmation now, when we are aſſured by the miracles wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, that the doctrine by them preached came from God; and ſo hath been received upon the credit of thoſe miracles ever ſince? Were theſe truths ſufficiently proved to be from God before, or no? If not, then all former ages have believed without ſufficient ground for faith; if they were, then what ground can there be to confirm us in them now? Certainly God, who never doth any thing but for very great purpoſes, will never alter the courſe of nature, merely for ſatisfaction of men's vain curioſities.

VII. But it may be, it will be ſaid, it was ſomething not fully revealed in Scripture which is thus confirmed by miracles: but where hath the Scripture told us that any thing not fully revealed therein ſhould be afterwards confirmed? Was the Scripture an infallible rule of faith while this was wanting in it? Did Chriſt and his Apoſtles diſcharge their places, when they left ſomething unrevealed to us? Was this a duty before theſe miracles, or no? If it was, what need miracles to confirm it? If not, Chriſt hath not told us all neceſſary conditions of ſalvation. For whatever is required as a duty, is ſuch; as the neglect of it runs men upon damnation. Laſtly, men's faith will be left at continual uncertainties; for we know not, according to this principle, when we have all that is neceſſary to be believed, or do all that is neceſſary to be practiſed in order to ſalvation. For if God may ſtill make new articles of faith, or conſtitute new duties by freſh miracles, I muſt go and enquire what miracles are wrought in every place, to ſee that I miſs nothing that may be neceſſary for me, in order to my happineſs in another world.

If

If men pretend to deliver any doctrine contrary to the Scripture, then it is not only neceſſary that they confirm it by miracles, but they muſt manifeſt the falſity of thoſe miracles on which that doctrine is believed, or elſe they muſt uſe another miracle to prove that God will ſet his ſeal to confirm both parts of a contradiction to be true: which being the hardeſt taſk of all, had need be proved by very ſufficient and undoubted miracles; ſuch as may be able to make us believe thoſe are miracles, and are not, at the ſame time; and ſo the ſtrength of the argument is utterly deſtroyed by the medium produced to prove it by.

By this diſcourſe theſe two things are clear; Firſt, that no pretences of miracles are to be hearkened to, when the doctrine we are to believe is already eſtabliſhed by them, if thoſe miracles tend in the leaſt to the derogation of the truth of what was eſtabliſhed by thoſe former miracles. Secondly, that when the full doctrine we are to believe is eſtabliſhed by miracles, there is no neceſſity at all of new miracles for confirmation of any of the truths therein delivered. And therefore it is a moſt unreaſonable thing to demand miracles of thoſe, to prove the truth of the doctrine they deliver, who do firſt ſolemnly profeſs to deliver nothing but what was confirmed by miracles in the firſt delivery of it, and is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; and ſecondly, do not pretend to any immediate commiſſion from heaven, but do nothing but what in their conſciences they think every true Chriſtian is bound to do: much more all magiſtrates and miniſters, who believe the truth of what they profeſs: which is in their places to reform all errors and abuſes which are crept into the doctrine or practice of Chriſtianity, through the corruption of men or times. And therefore it is a moſt unjuſt and unreaſonable demand of the Papiſts, when they require miracles from our firſt Reformers, to prove the truth of their doctrine with. Had they pretended to have come with an immediate commiſ-

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ſion from heaven to have added to the doctrine of the Goſpel, there had been ſome plea for ſuch a demand; but it was quite otherwiſe with them: their only deſign was *to whip the buyers and ſellers out of the Temple*, to purge the Church from its abuſes. And although that by Jerome was thought to be one of our Saviour's greateſt miracles; yet this by us is conceived to be no other than the duty of all magiſtrates, miniſters, and private Chriſtians; theſe by their prayers, miniſters by their doctrine, and magiſtrates by their juſt authority.

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CHAP. IV.

The Fidelity of the Prophets ſucceeding Moſes.

I. *An Order of Prophets to ſucceed* Moſes, *by God's own Appointment in the Law of* Moſes. II. *The Schools of the Prophets*; III. *the Original and Inſtitution of them.* IV. *The Cities of the* Levites. *The Occaſion of their firſt Inſtitution.* V. *The Places of the Schools of the Prophets, and the Tendency of the Inſtitution there to a prophetical Office.* VI. *Of the Muſic uſed in the Schools of the Prophets.* VII. *The* Roman *Aſſamenta, and the* Greek *Hymns in their ſolemn Worſhip.* VIII. *The two Sorts of Prophets among the* Jews, *lieger and extraordinary. Ordinary Prophets taken out of the Schools, proved by* Amos *and* Saul.

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BUT although now under the Goſpel (the revelation of God's will being completed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles) we have no reaſon either to expect new revelations, or new miracles for confirming the old; yet under the law, God training up his people by degrees till the coming of Chriſt, there was a neceſſity of a new ſupply of divine meſſengers, called Prophets, to prepare the people, and make way for the coming of Chriſt. As to whom theſe two things are conſiderable.

Firſt, Thoſe prophets, whoſe work was to inform the people of their duties, or to reprove them for their ſins, or to prepare them for the coming of the Meſſias (which were their chief taſks), had no need to confirm the truth of their doctrine or commiſſion from heaven, by the working of miracles among them. And that on theſe two accounts.

Firſt, Becauſe God did not conſummate the revelation of his mind and will to the Jews by the miniſtry of Moſes, but appointed a ſucceſſion of prophets to

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BOOK II. to be among them, to make known his mind unto them. Now in this caſe, when the prophetical office was eſtabliſhed among them, what neceſſity was there that every one that came to them upon an errand from God, ſhould prove his teſtimony to be true by miracles, when in the diſcharge of his office he delivered nothing diſſonant from the law of Moſes? It is one argument God intended a ſucceſſion of prophets, when he laid down ſuch rules in his law for the judging of them, whether they were truly inſpired or no, Deut. xviii. 21, 22. And in that ſame place God doth promiſe a ſucceſſion of prophets, Deut. xviii. 15, 18. *A prophet will the Lord God raiſe up unto thee like unto me; to him ſhall ye hearken.* Which words though in their full and complete ſenſe they do relate to Chriſt (who is the great prophet of the Church), yet whoever attends to the full ſcope of the words, will eaſily perceive that the immediate ſenſe of them doth relate to an order of prophets which ſhould ſucceed Moſes among the Jews; between whom and Moſes there would be a great ſimilitude as to their birth, calling, and doctrine, though not a juſt equality, which is excluded, Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11: and the chief reaſon why it is ſaid there that the other prophets fell ſo much ſhort of Moſes, is in regard of the ſigns and wonders which he wrought, as is there largely expreſſed. Nor may it ſeem ſtrange, that by a prophet ſhould be underſtood an order or ſucceſſion of prophets, when it is acknowledged by moſt Proteſtants that by ὁ Ἀντίχριστος, *the Antichriſt*, is underſtood a rank and ſucceſſion of ſeveral perſons in the ſame name and function. And that it is to be underſtood in thoſe words concerning a ſucceſſion of prophets, will appear by the occaſion of their being brought in; for ver. 14. God prohibits them to hearken, after the manner of their neighbour-nations, to obſervers of times and Diviners, and then brings in the following words, ver. 15. as to the reaſon of that prohibition, that *God would raiſe*

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raiſe up a prophet among themſelves like unto Moſes; and to him ſhould they hearken. Now let any rational man judge whether it were ſo probable an argument to keep them from hearkening to Diviners of other nations, that there ſhould a prophet ariſe 2000 years after like unto Moſes, as that he would raiſe up a continued ſucceſſion of prophets among themſelves, to whom they ſhould hearken. Thus Origen, in his excellent book againſt Celſus, ſhews the neceſſity of the prophetical office among the Jews from hence; *For*, ſaith he, *it being written in their law that the Gentiles hearkened unto oracles and divinations; but God would not ſuffer it to be ſo among them, it preſently follows, A prophet will the Lord God raiſe up in the midſt of thee*, &c. *Therefore*, ſaith he, *when the nations round about them had their oracles, and ſeveral ways of divination, all which were ſtrictly prohibited among the Jews, if the Jews had no way of foreknowing things to come, it had been almoſt impoſſible, conſidering the great curioſity of human nature, to have kept them from deſpiſing the law of Moſes, or apoſtatizing to the Heathen oracles, or ſetting up ſomething like them among themſelves.* Which interpretation of his ſeems to have a great deal of reaſon, not only from the coherence of the words here, but from the analogy of many other precepts of the law of Moſes; which it is moſt certain have a reſpect to the cuſtoms of the idolatrous nations round about them. Another reaſon why it is moſt probable, that by this is underſtood a ſucceſſion of prophets, is the charge which follows againſt falſe prophets, and the rules to diſcover them, ver. 20, 21, 22; which had not been ſo pertinent and coherent, if the oppoſition did not lie between the order of true prophets among the Jews, and the falſe prophets, which ſhould riſe up in the midſt of them. And that which yet further juſtifies this interpretation is, that there is no other place in the whole Pentateuch which doth expreſsly ſpeak of a ſucceſſion of prophets, if this be not underſtood of it; and is

V. Arabic. verſ. & Calv. in loc. P. Fagium, Pet. Mart. Loc. Com. Claſſ. I. cap. 3. ſect. 12.

Origin. con. Celſum, lib. i. p. 28. Ed. Spencer.

Deut. xviii. 14.

BOOK II. is it any ways probable a matter of ſo great moment and conſequence ſhould be wholly pretermitted? eſpecially when we find it ſo exactly performed in the ſucceeding ages of the Jewiſh commonwealth; their immediate rulers, like dictators at Rome, after Moſes's death, being moſt raiſed up by immediate incitation and impulſe from God, and many of them inſpired with a ſpirit of prophecy. How ſhould the Jews have expected theſe, or obeyed them when they appeared, had not God foretold it to them, and provided them for it by the law of Moſes?

II. Neither did theſe prophets ariſe ſingly among them, like blazing ſtars, one in an age, to portend future events, but whole conſtellations of them ſometimes appeared together; yea, ſo many ſmaller prophets were ſometimes united together, as made up a perfect Galaxy, when they were entered into ſocieties, and became ſchools of the prophets: for ſuch we frequently read of in Scripture. The original and inſtitution of which may caſt a further light into our preſent deſign, and ſhew us the little reaſon the Jews could have to expect miracles from them to confirm their doctrine, who were brought up in the knowledge of their law, and were called out from their ſeveral ſocieties into the prophetical office by the immediate incitation of God himſelf: which being ſo commonly known among them, there needed no ſuch extraordinary proofs to manifeſt the Divine authority by which they were employed. Two things then we ſhall endeavour to clear: Firſt, the original and inſtitution of theſe ſchools of the prophets; and, ſecondly, that it was the ordinary courſe for the prophets by employment to be taken forth of theſe ſocieties wherein they were educated. Firſt, for the original and inſtitution of theſe ſchools of the prophets. The firſt ſeminaries, or places of inſtitution among the Jews, were the cities of the Levites, which were diſperſed up and down in the ſeveral tribes of Iſrael; God thereby turning that into a bleſſing

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bleſſing, which was pronounced as a curſe upon Levi by his father Jacob, viz. *that he ſhould be divided in Jacob, and ſcattered in Iſrael.* But though the fulfilling of that prophecy might be the primary ground of that ſcattering, yet it is evident that God aimed at ſome further good in it, both in reference to the Levites and the Iſraelites. Lyra undertakes to aſſign four reaſons of this diſtribution of the cities of the Levites among the tribes. 1. Becauſe, if they had lived but in one tribe, the worſhip of God would have ſeemed to have been confined to that tribe. 2. Becauſe they would have been a burthen to that tribe they had their habitations in. 3. From the equity of being maintained by all who ſerved for all. 4. Becauſe it was their office to teach the people, and therefore it was neceſſary they ſhould live among them. Theſe reaſons are moſt of them oppoſed by Abulenſis, but defended by others. The laſt is that which moſt inſiſt on, it being the peculiar office of the Levites to teach the people; ſo 2 Chron. xxxv. 4. *And ſaid unto the Levites, qui erudiebant omnem Iſraelem*, as Vatablus renders it, *who taught all Iſrael*; and Maſius inſiſts on that as the great reaſon of their diſperſion, to be ready to teach the law among the Iſraelites. But yet all thoſe who are agreed that teaching the law was the duty of the Levites, are not yet agreed of the manner of that teaching; for there being two parts of their law, the one ceremonial and judicial, and the other moral and ſpiritual, the queſtion is, whether of theſe two did belong to, or was performed by the Prieſts and Levites? There are many who underſtand all that office of teaching, which belonged to the Prieſts and Levites, to be merely concerning the ceremonial law, i. e. deciding all caſes and controverſy which ſhould ariſe concerning their ceremonial worſhip, which in Levit. x. 10. is called *putting a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean.* But it ſeems ſomewhat ſtrange that God ſhould take ſo great care about

Gen. xlix. 7.

Joſh. xxi.

Abulenſis in Joſh. xxi. c. 7 & 8. V. Sherlog. Antiq. Hebraic. l. ii. c. 3. ſ. 4. Maſius in Joſh. c. 14.

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BOOK II.

about the ſhell and outſide of his worſhip, and none at all for the moral and ſpiritual part of it, eſpecially when he had ſet apart a whole tribe merely for his own ſervice, and freed them from all other employments, that they might have a greater liberty to attend upon the things relating to his ſervice; eſpecially when it is mentioned as the duty of the Prieſts and Levites, *to teach all the ſtatutes which the Lord had ſpoken to them by the hand of Moſes, and that they ſhall teach Jacob thy ſtatutes, and Iſrael thy law:* which, notwithſtanding what Abarbinel and others ſay, muſt certainly comprehend as well the moral as the ceremonial part of Moſes's law. And the Prieſt's *lips are ſaid to preſerve knowledge: and God ſaith they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth; for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts.* Do theſe things import no more than mere deciding the caſes of the ceremonial law? But whatever God's intention in the inſtitution of the Levites was, we find not much in Scripture of what they did for the promoting the moral and ſpiritual part of Divine worſhip. But it is no news to hear that ſocieties, inſtituted for good and pious ends, ſhould degenerate from the firſt intention of the founders of them; and thus it is probable it was with the Levites, who finding the moſt of their benefit and advantage to come in by the ceremonial caſes, might grow more negligent of the moral part of Divine ſervice, which brought no ſecular emolument to them.

Lev. x 10. Deut. xxxiii. 10.

Mal. ii. 7.

III. And thence we read not of theſe ſchools of the prophets, which were ſocieties in order to ſpiritual inſtruction, till about the time of Samuel; and many think him to have been the firſt author of them: for it is evident that about his time the prieſthood was grown to a great degeneracy, and men thereby eſtranged from the worſhip of God; ſo that there ſeemed almoſt a neceſſity then of reſtoring ſome ſocieties, who might have a ſpecial eye to the ſpiritual part of God's worſhip and ſervice. The occaſion of the inſtitution of them ſeems to have been from the reſort

1 Sam. iii. 1.

resort which the people had to the high places for sacrificing, during the captivity or uncertain abode of the *ark of God* after the desolation of Shiloh. Now the people resorting to these places to perform their solemnities, it was so ordered, that a company of prophets should be there resident to *bless the sacrifices*, and instruct the people. Two of these places, with the societies in them, we find mentioned in the time of Samuel. The first mentioned, 1 Sam. x. 5, 10. which cannot be Ramah, although the Syriac and Arabic versions so render it; for Samuel had his own residence in Ramah, whither Saul went to him, 1 Sam. ix. 18, 19. but in this chapter we find Samuel *sending* Saul on a journey from him, beyond Bethel and the plain of Tabor; and there tells him he should meet with the *company of prophets upon the hill of God*, ver. 5. Some think it was called the *Hill of God* because of its height; as *the cedars of God*, and *the mountains of God* for the highest: so Tirinus understands it; but Menochius, far more probably, *quia in ea erat cœtus & veluti schola prophetarum.* The Chaldee paraphrast renders it, *ad collem in quo arca Domini.* R. Solomon makes this hill to be Kirjahjearim, and therefore called *the hill of God*; because the *ark* was there in the *house of Abinadab in the hill.* But Lyra thinks he hath proved, that before this time the *ark* was removed from Kirjahjearim to Mizpah; but Abulensis more probably conceives it was never removed thither, and thinks this hill of God to be no other than Gibeah of Benjamin, where Saul inhabited; and thence the wonder was the greater, to see him propheſy among those who had known his former life and education. The other place is Naioth, in Ramah, where was a *high place*, whither the people came to sacrifice. This Ramah seems to have been the place of Samuel's nativity, called Ramathaim Sophim; which the Syriac version renders *collis specularum* (some, who would be ready to improve every thing for their purpose, would think

1 Sam. ix. 12, 13.

1 Sam. vii. 1.

Vid. Jun. in loc.

1 Sam. xix. 18, 20.

1 Sam. i. 1.

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think it was ſo called in alluſion to the employment of the young ſtudents there). So Heinſius conceives שדה צפים to be underſtood, Numb. xxiii. 14. the place of *watchmen*; from which word, ſaith he, without doubt, the Greeks derived their σοφοὶ, who were wont in ſuch high places to obſerve the courſe and motions of the heavens. But to paſs by ſuch frivolous conjectures: it ſeems a great deal more probable that this Ramah, which the Septuagint, by a light mutation of the initial letters, calls ἀρμαθαὶμ, was the ſame with Arimathæa, the town of Joſeph mentioned in the Goſpel. But the place where the ſchool of the prophets was, ſeems to have been, with greateſt conveniency, for a place of education, at ſome diſtance from the town. Vatablus conceives it was built in the fields of Ramah; and the word Naioth, ſaith Pet. Martyr, properly ſignifies *paſtures*, and ſome *remote places*, *quæ fere ſunt ſtudiis aptiſſima*. The Chaldee paraphraſt renders Naioth, by בית אולפנא, *a college, or ſchool of prophetical education*. Over this college Samuel himſelf was preſident, as moſt underſtand that place, 1 Sam. xix. 20. *And when they ſaw the company of prophets propheſying, and Samuel ſtanding as appointed over them.* Jonathan renders it, *Et Samuelem ſtantem docentem ſuper eos.* To which we may well apply the words of Philo, ſpeaking of the Jewiſh manner of inſtruction, τοῦ μὲν ἡγεμόνος ὑφηγεμένου καὶ διδάσκοντος, τῶν δὲ ἐπιδιδόντων εἰς καλοκαγαθίαν, καὶ βελτιουμένων τάτε ἤθη καὶ τὸν βίον. *The preſident going before and teaching, the reſt increaſing in goodneſs, and improving in life and manners.*

He nſ. Exercit. Sacræ, l. i. c. 2.

Phil. Jud. de v. Moſ. l. iii. p. 168. Ed. Mangey.

IV. Neither can we think ſo good and uſeful an inſtitution ſhould preſently degenerate, or be turned into another channel; and therefore ſome conceive that the moſt noted prophets, to the time of David, were the preſidents of theſe colleges: ſuch as beſides Samuel were Helcana, Gad, Nathan, Heman, and Jeduthun; and that they ſelected out the choiceſt and moſt hopeful of the young Levites, and here educated them,

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them, together with the Nazarites which came out of other tribes. And it seems very probable, that in all the most noted high places whither they went to sacrifice, there were such schools erected after the first institution of them. Thence we read of such multitudes of the prophets together in the time of Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 4. for when Jezabel cut off the prophets of the Lord, *Obadiah took an hundred, and hid them in caves:* certainly their number was very great, when an hundred might be saved without missing. The chief places where they resided, seem to have been Bethel, 2 Kings ii. 3. and Jericho, which was a large college; for therein we read of *fifty sons of the prophets standing together out of their number*, 2 Kings ii. 5, 7, 15. and Gilgal, which had been *a place of religion* from the first entrance into Canaan; there we find *the sons of the prophets sitting before Elisha*, 2 Kings iv. 38. It seems most probable that the purity of God's worship among the ten tribes, after the defection in the time of Jeroboam, was preserved by the prophets in their *several schools and places of habitation*; which hath sufficient foundation in that place, 2 Kings iv. 23. where the Shunamite's husband asks her, *Wherefore she would go to the man of God that day, seeing it was neither new moon nor Sabbath.* Whereby it is both evident that the prophets did undertake the office of instructing the people on their solemn festivals, and that it was their custom to resort to them for that end. Thus we see what care God took for the instruction of his people, in a time of so general an apostasy as that of the ten tribes was, when the Church of God could not be known by that constant visibility and outward glory which some speak so much of, but was then clouded in obscurity, and shrouded itself under the mantles of some prophets which God continued among them, and that not by any lineal succession neither; though the Jews would fain make the gift of prophecy to be a kind of *cabala* too, and conveyed in a constant succession from one

V. Manass. Ben Israel Concil. in Exod. ix. 35.

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prophet to another. Neither were these schools of the prophets only in Israel, but in Judah likewise was God known; and his name was great among these schools there. In Jerusalem itself there was a college, where Huldah the propheteſs lived, 2 Kings xxii. 14. Some render *Miſhna in ſecunda urbis parte*; for Jerusalem was divided into the upper and nether part of the city. Abulensis and Lyra will have it refer to the three walls of the city in which the three chief parts of it were compriſed: in the firſt, the temple and the king's palace; in the ſecond, the nobles and the prophets' houſes; and in the third, the common people. Joſephus ſeems to favour the diviſion of the city into three parts; but Pineda thinks the ſecond part of the city was moſt inhabited by artificers, and that the prophets, and the wiſe men, and ſuch as frequented the temple moſt, dwelt in the city of David within the firſt wall; and therefore he conjectures that the college was upon Mount Sion (and ſo properly called Sion College): and he explains that *houſe*, which *Wiſdom is ſaid to have built, and hewn out her ſeven pillars*, Prov. ix. 1. by this college, which he ſuppoſeth was built by Solomon in Mount Sion; and thence, ver. 3. *ſhe is ſaid to cry upon the higheſt places of the city*. Thus much may ſerve concerning the original and inſtitution of theſe ſchools of the prophets.

Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 4. Ed. Oxon. Pineda de Reb. Solom. l. iii. c. 28.

V. I now come to the ſecond thing promiſed concerning the ſchools of the prophets, which is, *That it was God's ordinary method to call thoſe perſons out of theſe ſchools, whom he did employ in the diſcharge of the prophetical office*. Two things will be neceſſary for the clearing of this. Firſt, What tendency their education in thoſe ſchools had towards the fitting them for their prophetical office? Secondly, What evidence the Scripture gives us that God called the prophets out from theſe colleges? The firſt of theſe is very requiſite to be cleared, becauſe the prophetical office depending upon immediate inſpiration, it is hard to conceive

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conceive what influence any antecedent and preparatory diſpoſitions can have upon receiving the prophetical ſpirit. It is commonly known how much the generality of Jewiſh writers do inſiſt on the neceſſity of theſe qualifications antecedent to a ſpirit of prophecy. 1. An excellent natural temper. 2. Good accompliſhments both of wit and fortunes. 3. Separation from the world. 4. Congruity of place (which they make proper to Judæa). 5. Opportunity of time. 6. And Divine inſpiration. Theſe are ſo largely diſcourſed of by many learned men from Jewiſh writers, that it will be both tedious and impertinent to recite much of their opinions concerning them; who, ſince they have loſt the gift of prophecy, ſeem to have loſt too that wiſdom and natural underſtanding, which they make one of the moſt neceſſary qualifications of a prophet. It is not eaſy to imagine what ſubſerviency riches could have to a prophetical ſpirit, unleſs the Jews be of Simon Magus's opinion, that theſe gifts of the Holy Ghoſt may be purchaſed with money; and if ſo, they think themſelves in as likely a way to bid fair for a prophetical ſpirit as any people in the world. Or is it that they think it impoſſible any without them ſhould have that free, cheerful, and generous ſpirit, which they make ſo neceſſary to a prophetic ſpirit, that it is an axiom of great authority with them, *Spiritus ſanctus non reſidet ſuper hominem mœſtum:* and they think Eliſha's fit of paſſion did excuſe his prophetic ſpirit from him, which he was fain to retrieve again with a fit of muſic. There are only two ſorts of thoſe antecedent diſpoſitions which ſeem to bear any affinity with the prophetic ſpirit: and thoſe are ſuch as tended to the improvement of their natural faculties, and ſuch as tended to their advancement in piety, and conſequently to the ſubduing all irregular motions in their ſouls: not that either of theſe did concur by way of efficiency to the production of a ſpirit of prophecy (which is an opinion Maimonides ſeems

V. G. Vor. in Maim. Fundam. Leg. c. 7. ſect. 1. Mr. Smith of Prophecy, c. 8.

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very favourable to), but that God might make choice particularly of ſuch perſons, to remove all prejudices againſt them in thoſe they were ſent unto; for nothing could poſſibly diſſatisfy them more concerning Divine inſpiration, than if the perſon who pretended to it were of very weak and ſhallow intellectuals, or known to be of an irregular converſation. In order therefore to the fuller ſatisfaction of men concerning theſe two qualifications, this inſtitution of them in the ſchools of the prophets was of great ſubſerviency; becauſe therein their only employment was to improve in knowledge, and eſpecially in true piety: this latter being the moſt neceſſary diſpoſition, ſince the Apoſtle hath told us that the prophets were *holy men; who ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* And in order to this, the greateſt part we can find of the exerciſes of thoſe who were educated in theſe ſchools of the prophets, were inſtructions in the law, and the ſolemn celebration of the praiſes of God; which appears in Scripture to have been their chief employment as prophets, and by which they are ſaid to propheſy: ſo at Gibeah, at the oratory there, *we find a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a pſaltery, a tabret and pipe, and a harp before them, and propheſying.*

Maimon. More Nev. l. ii. c. 36.

2 Pet. i. 21.

1 Sam. x. 5.

VI. It may ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange to conſider what relation theſe muſical inſtruments had to the propheſying here mentioned. Are muſical notes like ſome ſeeds naturaliſts ſpeak of, which will help to excite a prophetic ſpirit? Or do they tend to elevate the ſpirits of men, and ſo put them into a greater capacity of enthuſiaſm? Or is it becauſe muſic is ſo excellent for allaying the tumults of inward paſſions, and ſo fitting the ſoul for the better entertainment of the Divine Spirit? Or was all this propheſying here ſpoken of nothing elſe but vocal and inſtrumental muſic? So ſome indeed underſtand it, that it was only the praiſing God with ſpiritual ſongs and melody; wherein one as the præcentor began a hymn, which

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which the reſt took from him and carried on. I con- CHAP. IV.
feſs it carries the faireſt probability with it, that this propheſying with muſical inſtruments, was at their places and times of ſacrifices an adjunct, if not a part of the ſolemn ſervice of God; which was managed chiefly by the choir of the ſons of the prophets which were reſident there, and were trained up in all exerciſes of piety and devotion. But yet I cannot ſee any reaſon to think that all this propheſying was merely ſinging of hymns, and playing upon their muſical inſtruments to them, as ſome imagine; becauſe there ſeems to be implied ſome immediate impulſes of a prophetic ſpirit, by what Samuel ſaid to Saul, that when he came among the prophets, *the ſpirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he ſhould propheſy with them, and he ſhould become another man.* What ſtrange impulſe and wonderful transformation was this, merely for Saul to join with the prophets in their praiſes of God! And this needed not ſo much admiration as followed there upon this action of Saul's, that it ſhould become a proverb, *Is Saul alſo among the prophets?* Certainly Saul was a very great hater of all ſpiritual muſic before, if it became a proverb merely for his being preſent at, or joining with this company in ſinging their hymns. Therefore others think, that thoſe who are ſaid particularly to propheſy at theſe muſic meetings, were ſome perſons as chief among the reſt, who, having their ſpirits elevated by the muſic, did compoſe hymns upon the place by a Divine energy inwardly moving their minds; ſo that there were properly Divine raptures in ſome of them, which tranſported them beyond the ordinary power of fancy or imagination, in dictating ſuch hymns as might be ſuitable for the deſign of celebrating the honour of God.

1 Sam. x. 6.

1 Sam. x. 12.

VII. Neither may it ſeem ſtrange that ſuch an enthuſiaſtic ſpirit ſhould ſeize on them only at ſuch ſolemn times, ſince we read in the New Teſtament of a like

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exercise of such gifts in the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. where we see in *coming together every one had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation*, &c. whereby it appears that they were inspired upon the place, *etiam extemporales hymni sæpe ab afflatu erant*, as Grotius there observes; as we see it in frequent instances in Scripture, of Simeon and Anna, Moses and Miriam, Deborah and Isaiah; and in the Christian Church, after that land-flood of inspired gifts was much abated in the Church, they kept up a custom much like to these extemporal hymns, as appears evidently by Tertullian, *post aquam manualem & lumina ut quisque de Scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere.* After they had ended their love-feasts they begun their hymns, which were either taken from the Scriptures, or of their own composition: which Pliny takes notice of as a great part of the Christian worship, that they did *secum invicem carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere, they joined in singing hymns to Christ as God.* Nay, we find something very parallel to this preserved among the ruins of the Heathen worship: such were the Assamenta among the old Romans, which were peculiarly sung to the honour of some particular God; thence the Assamenta Janualia, Junonia, Minervia, which were *privata poemata & carmina in singulos eos Deos conscripta*, as the learned Joseph Scaliger observes. So likewise the Greeks had their solemn hymns to their Gods; some to the propitious Gods, which they called ὑμνοὺς ἱλητοὺς, and the Latins properly *Indigitamenta*, and *Carmen calatorium*: others they had to their *Vejoves*, or *læva Numina*, which they called ὕμνους ἀποτροπαίους· the Latins *Carmen Averruncale.* But besides these, they had some peculiar to the several Deities; as ὁ ὕπιγλος, to Diana; Παιᾶν, to Apollo; Ἴακλος, to Ceres; Dithyrambus, to Bacchus; Adonidia, to Adonis, as Proclus tells us in his Chrestomathia. And it is withal evident, that the Heathens thought some of their

Tertull. Apol. c. 39. Ed. Par.

Plin. Ep. l. x. ep. 97.

Scalig. Conj. in Varr. p. 121.

Proclus ap. Phot. Bibl. Cod. 239.

their prieſts inſpired while they were performing theſe ſolemn devotions to the Gods (which probably was by Satan, as many other things in Heathen worſhip, taken up in imitation of theſe inſpired hymns, and muſic uſed by the ſons of the prophets); but their hymns were ſo compoſed as to be fit rather to tranſport men beyond the power of their reaſon, than to compoſe and ſweeten it, which was ſuitable to the fanatic enthuſiaſm which was ſo common among them. So Proclus tells us, that the Io-Bacche was βεβαπλισμένον πολλῷ φρυάγματι, *full of noiſe and din*; and the Dithyrambus was κεκινημένον, καὶ πολὺ τὸ ἐνθουσιώδες μετὰ χορείας ἐμφαίνων, *a kind of extatic morrice-dance*; and their prieſts were apprehended by them to be under a real enthuſiaſm at theſe ſolemnities. So the Corybantes are deſcribed rather like mad-men than mere enthuſiaſts by Strabo; they were ἐνθουσιαστικοί τινες καὶ Βακχικοὶ, as he deſcribes them, *dancing about with their cymbals and drums, and arms and pipes* (as though a Bedlam had been broke looſe among them); yet this was in high eſteem among them; for, as Strabo after ſaith, ὅ τε ἐνθουσιασμὸς ἐπίνευσίν τινα θεῖαν ἔχειν δοκεῖ, καὶ τῷ μαντικῷ γένει πλησιάζειν, *this enthuſiaſm ſeemed to have a divine touch with it, and to come very near to a prophetic ſpirit.*

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p. 321.

Strabo, l. x. p. 322.

But though the propheſying with muſic among the ſons of the prophets might be by ſome extemporary hymns, immediately dictated by the præcentor of the chorus, yet we are not to imagine any ſuch frantic actions among them as were among the Curetes and Corybantes; it being always the devil's temper to over-do when he ſtrives to imitate, and, inſtead of ſolemn and ſet devotions, to carry men beyond all ſenſe and reaſon. The ſpirit of God did never dictate any Io-Bacche's or Dithyrambs to tranſport and amuſe the ſpirits of men, but thoſe ſweet airs, which might both compoſe and elevate the ſpirits of all that heard them. For in probability the ſpirits of all theſe prophets were as lutes tuned to the ſame

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same height, that when the Spirit of God did strike upon one of them, the rest presently answered to it, and so made up an entire consort among them. So Menochius thinks the Spirit of God not only moved the spirit of him who was the præcentor, but the rest likewise who joined with him; and they are said to prophesy, saith Torniellus, *forte quod non quascunque sed propheticas duntaxat cantiones præcinerent*; but from hence we clearly see what the great employment was in these schools of the prophets, which, as the same author expresseth, it was *statis horis de rebus divinis differere, & divinis laudibus vacare*; and thereby we understand what reference this institution had in order to the prophetical office, because the Spirit of God did much appear among them, and all their exercises tended to piety, and so did remove all prejudices from their persons, when God did send them abroad afterwards.

Tornielli Annal.

VIII. And so it is evident he frequently did, not to say always, for that were to put too great a restraint upon the boundless Spirit of God: for sometimes, as will appear afterwards, God sent the prophets upon extraordinary messages, and then furnished them with sufficient evidence of their Divine commission, without being beholden to the testimonials of the schools of the prophets. But besides these, God had a kind of lieger-prophets among his people: such were the most of those whom we read of in Scripture, which were no penmen of the sacred Scripture: such in David's time we may conceive Gad and Nathan; and afterwards we read of many other prophets and seers among them, to whom the people made their resort. Now these in probability were such as had been trained up in the prophetic schools, wherein the Spirit of God did appear, but in a more fixed and settled way than in the extraordinary prophets, whom God did call out on some more signal occasions; such as Isaiah and Jeremiah were. We have a clear foundation for such a distinction of prophets in those words

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words of Amos to Amaziah, Amos vii. 14, 15. *I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's ſon; but I was a herdſman, and a gatherer of ſycamore fruits: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock; and the Lord ſaid unto me, Go, propheſy to my people Iſrael.* Some underſtand the firſt words, *I was not a prophet*, that he was not born a prophet, as Jeremiah was, not deſigned and ſet apart to it from his mother's womb; but I rather think by his not being a prophet, he means he was none of thoſe reſident prophets in the colleges or ſchools of them, not any of thoſe who had led a prophetic life, and withdrawn themſelves from converſe with the world: nor *was I* (ſaith he) *the ſon of a prophet*, i. e. not brought up in diſcipleſhip under thoſe prophets, and thereby trained up in order to the prophetic function. *Non didici inter diſcipulos prophetarum*, as Pellican renders it; *nec inſtitutione qua filii prophetarum quaſi ad donum prophetiæ a parentibus præparabantur*, ſaith Eſtius. *Non a puero educatus in ſcholis propheticis:* ſo Calvin and moſt other modern interpreters underſtand it, as well as Abarbinel and the Jewiſh writers. Whereby it is evident that God's ordinary way for the prophets, was to take ſuch as had been trained up and educated in order to that end; although God did not tie up himſelf to this method, but ſometimes called one from the court, as he did Iſaiah; ſometimes one from the herds, as here he did Amos, and bid them *go propheſy to the houſe of Iſrael.* There was then a kind of a ſtanding college of prophets among the Iſraelites, who ſhined as fixed ſtars in the firmament; and there were others who had a more planetary motion, and withal a more lively and reſplendent illumination from the fountain of prophetic light. And further, it ſeems that the ſpirit of prophecy did not ordinarily ſeize on any, but ſuch whoſe inſtitution was in order to that end, by the great admiration which was cauſed among the people at Saul's ſo ſudden propheſying, that it became a proverb, *Is Saul alſo among the prophets?* which had

1 Sam. x. 12, 19, 24.

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BOOK II. had not given the leaſt foundation for an adage for a ſtrange and unwonted thing, unleſs the moſt common appearances of the ſpirit of prophecy had been among thoſe who were trained up in order to it. Thus I ſuppoſe we have fully cleared the firſt reaſon why there was no neceſſity for the ordinary prophets, whoſe chief office was inſtruction of the people, to prove their commiſſion by miracles, becauſe God had promiſed a ſucceſſion of prophets by Moſes, and theſe were brought up ordinarily to that end among them; ſo that all prejudices were ſufficiently removed from their perſons, without any ſuch extraordinary power as that of miracles.

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CHAP. V.

The Trial of the Prophetical Doctrine.

I. *Rules of trying Prophets eſtabliſhed in the Law of* Moſes. II. *The Puniſhment of Pretenders. The ſeveral Sorts of falſe Prophets. The Caſe of the Prophet at* Bethel *diſcuſſed.* III. *The Trial of falſe Prophets belonging to the great Sanhedrin.* IV. *The particular Rules whereby the Doctrine of Prophets was judged. The proper Notion of a Prophet not foretelling future Contingencies, but having immediate Divine Revelation.* V. *Several Principles laid down for clearing the Doctrine of the Prophets.* 1. *That immediate Dictates of natural Light are not to be the Meaſure of Divine Revelation. Several Grounds for Divine Revelation from natural Light.* VI. 2. *Whatever is directly repugnant to the Dictates of Nature, cannot be of Divine Revelation.* VII. 3. *No Divine Revelation doth contradict a Divine poſitive Law, without ſufficient Evidence of God's Intention to repeal that Law.* VIII. 4. *Divine Revelation in the Prophets was not to be meaſured by the Words of the Law, but by the Intention and Reaſon of it. The prophetical Office a Kind of Chancery to the Law of* Moſes.

THE ſecond reaſon why thoſe prophets, whoſe main office was inſtruction of the people, or merely foretelling future events, needed not to confirm their doctrine by miracles, is, becauſe they had certain rules of trial by their law, whereby to diſcern the falſe prophets from the true; ſo that if they were deceived by them, it was their own oſcitancy and inadvertency which was the cauſe of it. God, in that law which was confirmed by miracles undoubtedly divine, had eſtabliſhed a court of trial for prophetic ſpirits,

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ſpirits, and given ſuch certain rules of procedure in it, that no men needed to be deceived unleſs they would themſelves. And there was a greater neceſſity of ſuch a certain way of trial among them, becauſe it could not otherwiſe be expected, but in a nation where a prophetic ſpirit was ſo common, there would be very many pretenders to it, who might much endanger the faith of the people, unleſs there were ſome certain way to find them out. And the more effectually to deter men either from counterfeiting a prophetic ſpirit, or from hearkening to ſuch as did, God appointed a ſevere puniſhment for every ſuch pretender, viz. upon legal conviction that he be puniſhed with death. Deut. xviii. 20. *But the prophet which ſhall preſume to ſpeak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to ſpeak, or that ſhall ſpeak in the name of other gods, ſhall ſurely die.* The Jews generally underſtand this of ſtrangling, as they do always in the law, when the particular manner of death is not expreſſed. And therein a falſe prophet and a ſeducer were diſtinguiſhed each from other, that a mere ſeducer was to be ſtoned to death under ſufficient teſtimony, Deut. xiii. 6, 10. but the falſe prophet is there ſaid in general only to be put to death, Deut. xiii. 1, 5. The main difference between the ſeducer and falſe prophet was, that the ſeducer fought by cunning perſuaſions and plauſible arguments to draw them off from the worſhip of the true God; but the falſe prophet always pretended Divine revelation for what he perſuaded them to, whether he gave out that he had that revelation from the true God, or from idols and falſe gods. So that the mere pretence to Divine revelation, was that which God would have puniſhed with ſo great ſeverity.

V. Maimon. de Idol. c. 5. ſ. 1. & ibi Voſſium.

II. The Jews tell us of three ſorts of prophets who were to be puniſhed with death by men, and three other ſorts who were reſerved to Divine puniſhment. Of the firſt rank were theſe: 1. He that propheſied that which he had not heard; and for this they inſtance

V. Except. Gem. Sanhedr. c. 10. ſ. 3.

ſtance in Zedekiah, the ſon of Chenaanah, who made him horns of iron, and ſaid, *Thus ſaith the Lord*: this was the lying prophet. 2. He that ſpeaks that which was revealed not unto him, but to another: and for this they inſtance in Hananiah, the ſon of Azur (but how truly I ſhall not determine): this was the plagiary prophet. 3. He that propheſied in the name of an idol, as the prophets of Balaal did: this was the idol prophet. Theſe three, when once fully convicted, were to be put to death. The other rank of thoſe which were left to God's hand, conſiſted of theſe: 1. He that ſtifles and ſmothers his own prophecy, as Jonas did; by which it may ſeem, that when the Divine Spirit did overſhadow the underſtanding of the prophets, yet it offered no violence to their faculties, but left them to the free determination of their own wills in the execution of their office: but this muſt be underſtood of a lower degree of prophecy; for at ſome times their prophecies were *as fire in their bones*, that they were never at any reſt till they had diſcharged their office. But withal by the example of Jonas we ſee, that though the ſpirit of prophecy, like the fire on the altar, could only be kindled from Heaven, yet it might be deſtroyed when it was not maintained with ſomething to feed upon; or when it met not with ſuitable entertainment from the ſpirits of thoſe it fell upon, it might retreat back again to heaven, or at leaſt lie hid in the embers, till a new blaſt from the Spirit of God doth ἀναζωπυρεῖν, *retrieve* it into its former *heat* and *activity*. Thus it was with Jonas. 2. The other was, he that deſpiſed the words of a true prophet. Of ſuch God ſaith, Deut. xviii. 19. *And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken to my words which he ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him.* Which Maimonides explains by מיתה בידי שמים, *death by the hands of God*, which he thus diſtinguiſheth from the Cereth, that he makes the death, *per manus Cœli*, to be leſs than the Cereth; becauſe this latter continued in

1 Kings xxii. 11.

Jer. xxviii. 11.

Jer. xx. 9.

Maim. de Fundam. Legis, c. 9. ſ. 4. V. Abarbinel de Cereth.

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apud Buxtorf. de Sponſ. & Divort. p. 182.

2 Kings xiii 9. Ver. 18.

in the ſoul after death, but the other was expiated by death: but generally they interpret it of a ſudden death which falls upon the perſon. 3. The laſt is he who hearkens not to the words of his own prophecy; of which we have a moſt remarkable inſtance in Scripture, concerning the prophet whom God ſent to Bethel (whom Tertullian calls Sameas, the Jews Hedua), whom God deſtroyed in an unuſual manner for not obſerving the command which God had given him, *not to eat bread nor drink water at Bethel, nor turn again by the way he came.* Neither was it any excuſe to this prophet, that the old prophet at Bethel *told him that an angel ſpake unto him by the word of the Lord, that he ſhould turn back.* For, 1. Thoſe whom God reveals his will unto, he gives them full aſſurance of it, in that they have a clear and diſtinct perception of God upon their own minds; and ſo they have no doubt but it is the word of the Lord which comes unto them: but this prophet could have no ſuch certainty of the Divine revelation which was made to another, eſpecially when it came immediately to contradict that which was ſo ſpecially enjoined him. 2. Where God commands a prophet to do any thing in the purſuit of his meſſage, there he can have no ground to queſtion whether God ſhould countermand it or no by another prophet; becauſe that was in effect to thwart the whole deſign of his meſſage. So it was in this action of the prophet; for God intended his not eating and drinking in Bethel to teſtify how much he loathed and abominated that place ſince its being polluted with idolatry. 3. He might have juſt cauſe to queſtion the integrity of the old prophet, both becauſe of his living in Bethel, and not openly, according to his office, reproving their idolatry: and that God ſhould ſend him out of Judæa upon that very errand, which would not have ſeemed ſo probable, if there had been true prophets reſident upon the place. 4. The thing he deſired him to do was not an act of that weight and importance,

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portance, on which God uſed to ſend his word to any prophets, much leſs by one prophet to contradict what he had ſaid by another; and therefore Tertullian ſaith of him, *pœnam deſerti jejunii luit*, God puniſhed him for breaking his faſt at Bethel; and therefore that meſſage of this prophet ſeemed to gratify more man's carnal appetite than uſually the actions of prophets did, which were moſt times matters of hardſhip and uneaſineſs to the fleſh. 5. However all theſe were, yet he yielded too ſoon, eſpecially having ſo much reaſon on his ſide as he had; being well aſſured that God had commanded him, he had reaſon to ſee ſome clear evidence of a countermand before he altered his mind: if he had ſeen any thing upon trial which might have ſtaggered his faith, he ought to have made his immediate recourſe to God by prayer for the ſettlement of his mind, and removal of this great temptation. But ſo eaſily to hearken to the words of a lying prophet, which contradicted his own meſſage, argued either great unbelief as to his own commiſſion, or too great eaſineſs and inadvertency in being drawn aſide by the old prophet. And therefore God made that old prophet himſelf, in the midſt of his entertainment, as with a *hand-writing againſt the wall*, to tell him *he was weighed in the balance*, and *found too light*; and therefore his life ſhould be taken from him. Thus we ſee how dangerous a thing it was either to counterfeit a ſpirit of prophecy, or to hearken to thoſe who did.

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Tertullian. de Jejuniis, cap. 16.

III. It is the generally received opinion among the Jewiſh Doctors, that the cognizance and trial of falſe prophets did peculiarly belong to the great Sanhedrin; and that this was one end of its inſtitution. So Maimonides, after he has largely diſcourſed of the puniſhment of a ſeducer, and ſpeaking of that of a falſe prophet, he lays this down as a ſtanding rule among them, ואין דנין נביא השקר אלא בבד של ע"א, *No falſe prophet was to be judged but in the court of Seventy-one*; which was the number of the great Sanhedrin.

Maimon. de Idololat. c. 5. ſ. 11.

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Jer. xxvi. 8. And there is ſomething looks very like this in the proceedings of the people of Iſrael againſt the prophet Jeremiah; for the people, the prieſts, and the prophets, they laid hold on him: and immediately after we read that the princes of Judah (by whom Grotius underſtands the ſenators of the great Sanhedrin) *they came up from the king's houſe to the houſe of the Lord, and ſat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's houſe*; (which probably was the place where the great Sanhedrin ſat) where, after a particular examination of Jeremiah, they acquit him as a *perſon not worthy to die* upon a counterfeiting prophecy; but declare *that he ſpake unto them in the name of the Lord.* And in this ſenſe Grotius likewiſe underſtands what is ſaid of Zedekiah concerning Jeremiah, to the princes of Judah afterwards, *Behold he is in your hand*; *for the king is not he that can do aught againſt you*; i. e. ſaith Grotius, *In manibus Synedrii, cujus eſt judicare de propheta vero aut falſo.* And to this many make thoſe words of our Saviour refer, *That it is impoſſible a prophet ſhould periſh out of Jeruſalem*; becauſe the ſeat of the great Sanhedrin was in Jeruſalem: and ſo elſewhere our Saviour ſaith, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee*; becauſe there it was the true prophets were deſtroyed as though they had been falſe ones, and God's own meſſengers puniſhed with the death of ſeducers, which was lapidation. And on this very account, many are of opinion that our Saviour was condemned by the Sanhedrin at Jeruſalem, which is ſuppoſed to have been aſſembled in the houſe of Caiaphas the High Prieſt, when Chriſt was carried thither for examination; which ſome think to have been at his lodgings in the Temple, others at his palace in the city; for we read that the Chief Prieſts, and the Elders, and all the Council were met together at the High Prieſt's palace, in order to our Saviour's trial. The next morning they were met early together again, in order to the further ſcanning of this buſineſs: but they

Ver. 10. V. Grot. in loc. & Seld. de Syn. l. ii. c. 15. f. 4. & l. iii. c. 6. f. 4.

Jer. xxvi. 16.

Jer. iii. 6.

Luke xiii. 33.

Matth. xxiii. 37.

Matth. xxvi. 59.

ſeem

ſeem not to examine Chriſt concerning a true ſpirit of prophecy, but concerning his being the Meſſias, and calling himſelf *the Son of God*; and ſo they would ſeem rather to proceed upon the law againſt blaſphemy, than that againſt falſe prophets. CHAP. V. Matth. xxvi. 63.

IV. But that which was the greateſt ſecurity of the people againſt the impoſture of falſe prophets, was the certain rules of judging them which were laid down in the law of Moſes; which may be comprehended under theſe two heads: ſuch as concern their doctrine, or ſuch as concern their predictions. Firſt, ſuch as concerned the prophets' doctrine; which ſhould eſpecially be looked after, becauſe the main office of a prophet was to be *interpres & internuncius divinæ voluntatis*, to be *a revealer of God's will to men*. For the primary notion of a prophet doth not lie in foretelling future events, but in declaring and interpreting to the world the mind of God, which he receives by immediate revelation from himſelf. So that the receiving what he makes known by immediate revelation, is that which formally conſtitutes a prophet; but it is wholly extrinſical and accidental what time his prophecy reſpects, whether paſt, preſent, or to come: but becauſe future contingencies are the furtheſt out of the reach of human underſtanding, therefore the predictions of ſuch have been chiefly looked on as the chief note and character of a prophet, as being apprehended to be the ſtrongeſt evidence of Divine revelation. And hence it is in Scripture that the patriarchs, as Abraham and others, are called Prophets; not becauſe of any predictions uttered by them, but becauſe of the frequency of immediate Divine revelations among them. And hence likewiſe thoſe in the New Teſtament, who expounded the Scriptures by immediate inſpiration, are called Prophets; and this was the Ἀποκάλυψις ſpoken of by the Apoſtle, the expoſition of the hidden myſteries of the Old Teſtament by an immediate inſpiration. And there is no word in the Hebrew for a Pſalm cv. 15. Gen. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

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prophet, which may not equally reſpect all differences of time; but every one doth import immediate inſpiration: for נביא properly is one *qui revelat abſcondita*; ראה a *ſeer*, chiefly reſpects the clear repreſentation of the intellectual ſpecies by the *lumen propheticum* to the underſtanding; and חזה carries an equal indifferency to all circumſtances of time.

Vide Alſtedii Trifol. Proph. P. 53.

V. This being then the chief notion of a prophet, whatever he declared as the mind and will of God muſt be ſearched and examined, to ſee what conſonancy it hath thereto. For the queſtion which Moſes ſuppoſeth, is founded upon clear and evident reaſon, *And if thou ſhalt ſay in thine heart, How ſhall we know the word which the Lord hath not ſpoken?* For it being plain that there may be falſe prophets as well as true, we had need of ſome certain rules to judge of what is delivered for Divine revelation. For the clearing of which important queſtion, I lay down theſe principles.

Deut. xviii. 21.

1. *The immediate dictates of natural light are no ſufficient ſtandard to judge of Divine revelation by.* I mean not in reference to conſonancy or repugnancy to natural light, but in reference to the extent and latitude of Divine revelation, i. e. that natural light doth not contain in it whatever may be known of God or of his will; and that upon theſe reaſons: 1. It implies no repugnancy to any dictate of nature, that God ſhould reveal any thing more of his mind and will, than is contained in the light of nature. 2. Nature reacheth, as to matters concerning religion, no further than the obligation to duty, but leaves the particular determination of the manner of obedience to Divine poſitive laws; as is clear in reference to the time, place, and particular duties of worſhip. 3. Nature owning an univerſal obligation to the will of God in whatever he ſhall command, doth ſuppoſe a power in God to command what he pleaſeth. 4. Nature is ſenſible of its own decays, and the imperfection of its own light, and therefore ſeems rather to require further

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further illumination, than to put any bar againſt it. CHAP. V.
5. Man's happineſs being a free gift of God's, it ſtands to the higheſt reaſon that he ſhould have the preſcribing of the conditions which are in order to it; now theſe conditions being the reſults, not of God's nature, but of his arbitrarious will, it is impoſſible that natural light could ever reach to the full diſcovery of them. 6. It hath been the general ſenſe of all nations in the world, that God may reveal more of his will than nature can reach unto: which ſenſe diſcovers itſelf in two things. 1. Praying to their ſeveral gods for direction. 2. Hearkening after pretended oracles; which the devil could never have had that advantage of deceiving the world by, had it not been for this general ſenſe of mankind, that there wanted ſome particular revelation from God to make men happy. So then this may be aſſumed as a principle, that God may reveal more of his mind and will to mankind, than he hath done by the dictates of mere natural light and reaſon.

2. *Whatever ſpeaks a direct repugnancy to any of the fundamental dictates of nature, cannot be of Divine revelation.* For thoſe being founded, not upon any poſitive or arbitrary will, but upon thoſe inward impreſſions which are derived from the Divine nature itſelf, it cannot in reaſon be ſuppoſed that God ſhould commiſſion any to enervate his own fundamental law, and ſo by one will to contradict another. *Placitum regis* muſt never ſtand againſt the *placita coronæ*: thoſe things which depend upon fundamental and eſtabliſhed laws, hold good againſt any poſitive ſentence or declaration of a prince's will; becauſe he is ſuppoſed to have bound up himſelf by the eſtabliſhed laws, and therefore any thing elſe which comes from him contrary to them, is ſuppoſed not to be the will of the prince, but of the perſons perſuading him to it. But this now cannot be ſuppoſed in God, that he ſhould be any ways drawn to caſſate the obligation of what is imprinted upon the ſouls of men as his own VI.

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law. But yet we must distinguish between nulling the general obligation, and altering the particular nature of any thing which depends upon that general law. The first in any case is impossible, that any Divine revelation should make it not to be man's duty to obey his Maker, or not to be a sin to commit murder, to lie, or to steal from another: but there may come a particular revelation from God to alter the respects and nature of such things as do immediately depend upon his own dominion; as the lives of persons, and the properties of things are: and thus God did reveal to Abraham that he should go and sacrifice his son, which had been no murder, when done upon God's immediate command, and for a sacrifice to himself, and therefore would have been acceptable as a testimony of entire obedience (which God did accept without the act); and so the Israelites taking the Egyptians' jewels, and dispossessing the Canaanites, did depend upon God's immediate disposal of these things to them, which otherwise had been a sin in them; and no doubt was so to any that were unsatisfied whether God had immediately commanded it or no. Or from hence to infer any general rule, is, no doubt, a breach of Divine commands, and contrary to his nature and will.

VII. 3. *Where God hath established a positive law, prescribing a form and manner wherein he will be worshipped, it is sufficient evidence of a false prophet to go about to null the obligation of that law, unless there be as great evidences given that God did intend the establishing a new law by that person, as he did at first the institution of the old by the hand of Moses.* This latter clause is inserted to shew that the succeeding of the doctrine of Christ into the place of the law of Moses, doth not bear any repugnancy to the hypothesis laid down; there being greater evidences of God's intending the abolishing the ceremonial law by the Gospel of Christ, than there were of the establishment of it by Moses. But of those afterwards. I now only speak of such as,

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as, upon the mere pretence of Divine revelation, ſhould deſtroy any precept of an eſtabliſhed poſitive law; and this, as far as we can find, was the great rule the Jews went by; if any thing were ſpoken by any prophet contrary to the law of Moſes, or tending to the alteration of the worſhip of God eſtabliſhed thereby, he was accounted a falſe prophet. The modern Jews, to juſtify themſelves in their own belief as to the doctrine of Chriſt, extend this further than the law doth; for they enlarge it to all the precepts of the ceremonial law; whereas God in the law ſeems to limit it to the moral law, and chiefly inſiſts on the three firſt precepts of the Decalogue; and therefore condemns ſuch a *one* as *ſpake in the name of the Lord, when he had not commanded them*, Deut. xviii. 20. and ſuch as *endeavoured to bring in idolatry*, Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. where, though the falſe prophet ſhould offer to do ſigns and wonders before them, yet, if his intention were to draw them to worſhip falſe Gods, they were not to hearken unto him. And therefore Maimonides, where he largely diſputes about the truth of prophecies, lays this down as a certain rule: *Si propheta ſurrexerit, atque magna miracula aut prodigia fecerit, & adlaboraverit falſitatis convincere prophetiam Moſis M. n. iſtum non audimus, quia certo novimus prodigium præſtigiis aut incantationibus productum eſſe*, as Vorſtius renders him. *If a prophet do never ſo great miracles, and ſeeks to convince Moſes of falſehood, we are not to hearken to him: for we know that they are not done by the power of God, but by the illuſion of the devil.* And elſewhere he tells us, that if any one pretends to prophecy בשם עכוים *in the name of idols, they muſt not ſo much as diſpute with him, nor anſwer him, nor deſire any ſigns or miracles from him; and if of himſelf he ſhews any, we are not to regard or mind them; for*, ſaith he, *whoever doth but doubt in his mind concerning them, he breaks that command, And thou ſhalt not hearken to the words of that prophet.* So that the doctrine once eſtabliſhed ought to be our moſt certain rule, ac-

Maimon. de Fund. Leg. c. 8. ſ. 7.

Idem de Idololat. Leg. c. 5. ſ. 9.

Deut. xiii. 3.

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VIII. 4. *The doctrine of those prophets who seek not to introduce idolatry, must not be measured by a strict conformity to the words of Moses's law, but to the main reason and intention of it.* The great reason of this is, because God did not intend the Jews should always rest in the Pædagogy of the ceremonial law, but sent them prophets to train them up by degrees, and to fit them for a state of greater perfection; and therefore it would be very unreasonable to judge whether they were true prophets or no, exactly by that which they came gradually to wean them from; which were all one as to try one whether he were grown a man or no by the swaddling-clouts he wore when he was a child. God tempered the ceremonial law much according to the condition and capacity of the persons it was prescribed to, and therefore the sanctions of it did immediately respect their temporary concerns: but we are not to think the end of that dispensation was to be merely a covenant for the Land of Promise; but as the cherubims in the Temple did always look towards the Mercy-seat, so did this whole *œconomy* look towards the coming of the Messias. But it was with the generality of the Jews as it is with ignorant people, who looking up to the heavens cannot fancy the stars to be any bigger than they seem to them; but astronomers, by the help of their optic-tubes and telescopes, do easily discern the just magnitude of them. So the Jews ordinarily thought there was no more in those types and shadows than was visibly represented to them; but such as had the help of the Divine Spirit (the best telescope to discern the day-star from on high with) could easily look through those prospectives into the most glorious mysteries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; these types being like triangular prisms, that must be set in a due

due light and poſture, before they can repreſent that great variety of ſpiritual myſteries which was contained in them. Now the great office of the prophet was to adminiſter this light to the people, and to direct them in thoſe excellent pieces of perſpective, wherein, by the help of a prophetic glaſs, they might ſee the Son of God fully repreſented to their view. Beſides this, the prophetical office was a kind of Chancery to the Moſaic law; wherein the prophets did interpret the pandects of the law *ex æquo & bono*, and frequently ſhewed in what caſes God did diſpenſe with the outward letter of it, to exalt the more the inward ſenſe and reaſon of it. Hence the prophets ſeem many times to ſpeak contemptibly of the outward preſcribed ceremonies, when their intent is not to condemn the obſervation of them, but to tell the people there were greater things which God looked at, than the outward obſervation of ſome ceremonial precepts; and that God would never accept of that by way of commutation for real and internal goodneſs. Hence the prophets by their own practice did frequently ſhew that the law of Moſes did not ſo indiſpenſibly oblige men, but that God would accept of thoſe actions which were performed without the regularity required by the law of Moſes; and thus he did of ſacrificing upon high places, not only before the building of the Temple, but ſometimes after; as he accepted of the ſacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel, even when high places were forbidden: which the Jews are become ſo ſenſible of, that they grant that a true prophet may ſometimes command ſomething to be done in violation of the law of Moſes, ſo he doth not draw people to idolatry, nor deſtroy the obligation of Moſes's law. But this they reſtrain to לפי שעה ſomething done in caſe of neceſſity, and that it ſhould not paſs into a precedent or a perpetual law; and therefore their rule is לפי שעה שימענו לו בכל, *The prophet was to*

Pſalm l. 8, li. 16. Iſa. i. 11, 13. lxvi. 3. Jer. vii. 21, 22, 23.

1 Kings xviii. 38.

Vid. Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 21. Et Vorſt. ad Maim. de Fund. c. 9. ſ. 5, 6, 7.

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to be hearkened to in every thing he commanded in a caſe of neceſſity. By this it is clear that the prophets were not to be tried by the letter of the law of Moſes, but by the end and the reaſon of it. Thus much I ſuppoſe will make it clear what rules the people had to try the prophets' doctrine by, without miracles.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

The Trial of Prophetical Predictions and Miracles.

I. *The great Difficulty of trying the Truth of prophetical Predictions from* Jer. xviii. 7, 8, &c. *Some general Hypotheſes promiſed for the clearing of it.* II. *The firſt concerns the Grounds why Predictions are accounted an Evidence of Divine Revelation. Three Conſectaries drawn thence.* III. *The ſecond, the Manner of God's Revelation of his Will to the Minds of the Prophets. Of the ſeveral Degrees of Prophecy.* IV. *The third is, that God did not always reveal the internal Purpoſes of his Will unto the true Prophets.* V. *The grand Queſtion propounded, How it may be known when Predictions expreſs God's Decrees, and when only the Series of Cauſes? For the firſt, ſeveral Rules laid down.* 1. *When the Prediction is confirmed by a preſent Miracle.* 2. *When the Things foretold exceed the Probability of ſecond Cauſes.* VI. 3. *When confirmed by God's Oath.* VII. 4. *When the Bleſſings foretold are purely ſpiritual.* VIII. *Three Rules for interpreting the Prophecies which reſpect the State of Things under the Goſpel.* IX. *When all Circumſtances are foretold.* 6. *When many Prophets in ſeveral Ages agree in the ſame Predictions.* X. *Predictions do not expreſs God's unalterable Purpoſes, when they only contain Comminations of Judgments, or are Predictions of temporal Bleſſings.* XI. *The Caſe of the* Ninevites, Hezekiah, *and others, opened.* XII, XIII. *Of Repentance in God, what it implies.* XIV. *The* Jewiſh *Objections about Predictions of temporal Bleſſings anſwered.* XV. *In what Caſes Miracles were expected from the Prophets: when they were to confirm the Truth of their Religion. Inſtanced in the Prophet at* Bethel, Elijah, Eliſha, *and*

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and Moſes *himſelf*; XVI. *whoſe Divine Authority that it was proved by Miracles, is demonſtrated againſt the modern* Jews, *and their Pretences anſwered.*

I. THE next thing which the rules of trial concerned, was the predictions of the prophets. Concerning which God himſelf hath laid down this general rule, Deut. xviii. 22. *When a prophet ſpeaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to paſs, that is the thing which the Lord hath not ſpoken, but the prophet hath ſpoken it preſumptuouſly; thou ſhalt not be afraid of him.* Grotius underſtands this place of the prophet's telling the people he would do ſome miracles to confirm his doctrine; but if thoſe miracles were not done as he ſaid, it was an evident demonſtration of a falſe prophet. It is certain it was ſo; for then his own mouth told him he was a lying prophet: but theſe words ſeem to refer rather to ſomething future than preſent, and are therefore generally underſtood concerning the truth of predictions; which was a matter of very difficult trial, in regard of the goodneſs or the juſtice of God ſo frequently interpoſing between the prediction and the event. That place which makes it ſo difficult to diſcern the truth of a prediction by the event, is Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. *At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it; if that nation againſt whom I have pronounced turn from evil, I will repent of the evil I had thought to do unto them: and at what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my ſight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good wherewith I ſaid I would benefit them.* By which place it ſeems clear, that even after the predictions of prophets God reſerved a liberty to himſelf either to repent of the evil or the good that was foretold concerning any people: how then can the fidelity of a prophet be diſcovered by the event, when God may alter the event, and yet the prophet be a true prophet?

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phet? This being a case very intricate and obscure, will call for the more diligence in the unfolding of it: in order to which, we shall first premise some general hypotheses, and then come to the particular resolution of it. The general hypotheses will be concerning the way and method of God's revealing future contingencies to the prophets; without which it will be impossible to resolve the particular emergent cases concerning predictions. CHAP. VI.

II. 1 Hypoth. *The prediction of future events is no further an argument of a prophetic spirit, than as the foreknowledge of those things is supposed to be out of the reach of any created understanding*; and therefore God challengeth this to himself in Scripture, as a peculiar prerogative of his own, to declare the things that are to come, and thereby manifest the idols of the Gentiles to be no Gods, *because they could not shew to their worshippers the things to come*, Isa. xliv. 6, 7. From this hypothesis these three consectaries follow:

1. That the events which are foretold must be such as do exceed the reach of any created intellect; for otherwise it could be no evidence of a spirit of true prophecy; so that the foretelling of such events as depend upon a series of natural causes, or such as, though they are out of the reach of human understanding, yet are not of the diabolical, or such things as fall out casually true, but by no certain grounds of prediction, can none of them be any argument of a spirit of prophecy.

2. That where there were any other evidences that the prophet spake by Divine revelation, there was no reason to wait the fulfilling of every particular prophecy before he was believed as a prophet. If so, then many of God's chiefest prophets could not have been believed in their own generations; because their prophecies did reach so far beyond them as Isaiah's concerning Cyrus, the prophet at Bethel concerning Josias: and all the prophecies concerning the Captivity and deliverance from it must not have been

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been believed till fulfilled; that is, not believed at all: for when prophecies are accomplished, they are no longer the objects of faith, but of sense. Where then God gives other evidences of Divine inspiration, the credit of the prophet is not suspended upon the minute accomplishment of every event foretold by him. Now it is evident there may be particular Divine revelation of other things besides future contingencies; so that if a reason may be given why events once foretold may not come to pass, there can be no reason why the credit of any prophecy should be invalidated on that account; because every event is not exactly correspondent to the prediction. It is most certain that whatever comes under Divine knowledge, may be divinely revealed; for the manifestation which is caused by any light, may extend itself to all things to which that light is extended: but that light which the prophet saw by was a divine light, and therefore might equally extend itself to all kind of objects; but because future contingencies are the most remote from human knowledge, therefore the foretelling of these hath been accounted the great evidence of a true prophet: but yet there may be a knowledge of other things in a lower degree than future contingencies, which may immediately depend upon Divine revelation; and these are,

1. Such things which cannot be known by any particular man, but yet are certainly known by other men; as the present knowledge of things done by persons at a remote distance from them: thus Elisha knew what Gehazi did when he followed Naaman; and thus the knowledge of the thought of another's heart depends upon immediate Divine revelation: whereas every one may certainly know the thought of his own heart; and therefore to some those things may be matters of sense or evident demonstration, which to another may be a matter of immediate revelation.

2 Kings v. 26.

1 Cor. xiv. 25.

2. Such

2. Such things as relate not to future contingencies, but are matters of faith exceeding the reach of human apprehenſion; ſuch things as may be known when revealed, but could never have been found out without immediate revelation: ſuch all the myſteries of our religion are, the myſtery of the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Hypoſtatical Union*, the death of the Son of God for the pardon of the ſins of mankind. Now the immediate revelation of either of theſe two ſorts of objects ſpeaks as much a truly prophetical ſpirit, as the prediction of future contingencies; ſo that this muſt not be looked on as the juſt and adequate rule to meaſure a ſpirit of prophecy by: becauſe the ground of judging a prophetical ſpirit by that, is common with other things without that, ſeeing other objects are out of the reach of human underſtanding as well as future events; and therefore the diſcovery of them muſt immediately flow from Divine revelation.

3. The revelation of future events to the underſtanding of a prophet is nevertheleſs immediate, although the event may not be correſpondent to the prediction. So that if it be manifeſted that God immediately reveal ſuch future contingencies to a prophet, he would be nevertheleſs a true prophet whether thoſe predictions took effect or no. For a true prophet is known by the truth of Divine revelation to the perſon of the prophet, and not by the ſucceſs of the thing; which, as is laid down in the hypotheſis, is no further an evidence of a true prophet, than as it is an argument *à poſteriori* to prove Divine revelation by. If then the alteration of events after predictions be reconcileable with the truth and faithfulneſs of God, there is no queſtion but it is with the truth of a prophetical ſpirit, the formality of which lies in immediate revelation.

III. 2. Hypoth.

The prophets could not declare any thing more to the people than was immediately revealed unto themſelves. What was preſently revealed, ſo much they knew, and

BOOK II. and no more; becauſe the ſpirit of prophecy came upon them *per modum impreſſionis tranſeuntis*, as the ſchools ſpeak, and not *per modum habitus*; the *lumen propheticum* was in them, not as *lumen in corpore lucido*, but as *lumen in aëre*; and therefore the light of revelation in their ſpirits depended upon the immediate irradiations of the Divine Spirit. The prophets had not always a power to propheſy when they would themſelves; and hence it is ſaid, when they propheſied, that the *Word of the Lord came unto them.* And therefore the ſchools determine, that a prophet upon immediate revelation did not know *omnia prophetabilia* (as they ſpeak in their barbarous language), *all things which God might reveal*; the reaſon whereof Aquinas thus gives: *The ground*, ſaith he, *of the connection of divers objects together, is ſome common tie or principle which joins them together, as charity or prudence is in moral virtues; and the right underſtanding of the principles of a ſcience, is the ground why all things belonging to that ſcience are underſtood; but now in Divine revelation, that which connects the objects of Divine revelation is God himſelf: now becauſe he cannot be fully apprehended by any human intellect, therefore the underſtanding of a prophet cannot comprehend all matters capable of being revealed, but only ſuch as it pleaſeth God himſelf freely to communicate to the prophet's underſtanding by immediate revelation.* This is further evident by all thoſe different degrees of illumination and prophecy which the Jews and other writers ſpeak ſo much of, viz. of dreams and viſions, the inſpirations of the Holy Spirit, the *Gradus Moſaicus*, the external voice, &c. Now in every one of theſe degrees the prophet could go no further than his preſent revelation extended; and therefore Aquinas determines, that the underſtandings of the prophets were *inſtrumenta deficientia reſpectu principalis agentis*, i. e. that in prophetical illumination the mind of the prophet was ſo moved by the Spirit of God, as an inſtrument in the hand of an artificer, which bears no proportion

2. 2. q. 171. art. 2—4.

2. 2. q. 173. art. 3.

proportion with the ſkill of the workman: and therefore the mind of a prophet is moved ſometimes only to apprehend the thing repreſented (which they call *Inſtinctus Divinus*, of which they ſay a prophet may have no certainty whether it comes from God or no); ſometimes it is moved ſo far as to know certainly that this revelation is from God (this they call *Lumen Propheticum*); ſometimes a prophet may be moved to ſpeak thoſe things which he fully underſtands; ſo it was with moſt of the true prophets: but ſometimes men may be moved to ſpeak that which they underſtand not, as is plain in Caiaphas, and probable in Balaam. Sometimes a thing was repreſented to the fancy of one, without any poſſibility of underſtanding the meaning of thoſe imaginary ſpecies, as in Pharaoh's and Nebuchadnezzar's dreams; and to another may be given the true judgment of thoſe motions of fancy, without the repreſentation of the things to them; as in Joſeph and Daniel. Now in theſe and many other different impreſſions of this prophetical ſpirit, the prophets, to whom the things were revealed, could go no further than the degree of the revelation made to them did extend. CHAP. VI.

IV. 3. Hypoth.

God did not always reveal to the prophets the internal counſels and decrees of his own will, but often only the method and ſeries of his providence in the adminiſtration of things in the world. Which is the ground of that threefold diſtinction of prophecy in the ſchools, into *Prophetia Prædeſtinationis*, *Prophetia Præſcientiæ*, and *Prophetia Comminationis*; which is taken from the ordinary gloſs upon Matth. i. where they are thus explained: *The prophecy of predeſtination* is, when the event depends wholly upon God's will, without any reſpect to ours, as the *prophecy* of the *incarnation of Chriſt*; and the *prophecy of preſcience* is of ſuch things as depend upon the liberty of man's will; and the *prophecy of commination* only denotes God's denunciations of heavy judgments againſt a people. But

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Aquinas doth better reduce the two former to one; and the ground of the difference is to be fetched from the different ways whereby God knows things in the world; which is either as they are in their cauſes, and ſo they note the order and ſeries of things in the world, with the mutual reſpects and dependencies they have upon one another, and this refers to God's adminiſtration of things in the world; or elſe God looks upon them as they are in themſelves, or according to his own poſitive determinations of them: and now in this ſenſe they are unalterable; but in the other they are not; but God may alter thoſe reſpects of things when he pleaſeth. Now though theſe different manners of knowledge can never be conceived ſeparate from one another in the Divine underſtanding; yet in the revelation made to the mind of a prophet they may be disjoined from each other, becauſe God doth not always reveal things in the higheſt degree to the prophets; for no free agent doth always act as far as he can: and therefore prophetical revelation is ſometimes a repreſentation of God's internal decrees, and then they always take effect; and ſometimes only the order of cauſes and effects, and they may admit of an alteration, and the prophecy nevertheleſs be true, becauſe then it referred only to the ſeries of cauſes in the world, according to which the events would follow, if God himſelf did not interpoſe. Theſe things being thus premiſed, we come to particular reſolutions, which muſt ariſe from the evidences that may be given when prophetical predictions did expreſs God's internal purpoſe and decree, and when only the order of the cauſes in the world; for in theſe latter it is apparent that events might not anſwer predictions, and yet the prophet be a true prophet: which is a matter of greater difficulty, viz. to find out the exact differences of theſe two, till the event hath made it apparent which came from God's unalterable purpoſe, and which not. But though it be a ſubject little

little ſpoken to either by Jewiſh or Chriſtian writers; yet we are in hopes there may be ſome ſuch clear notes of diſtinction diſcovered between them, even *à priori*, which may ſufficiently clear God's faithfulneſs and the prophet's truth, though the event be not always correſpondent to the words of a prediction.

I begin then with the evidences that may be given when predictions do flow from internal purpoſe and decree. VI.

1. *Every prediction confirmed by a preſent miracle doth not expreſs merely the order of cauſes, but the determinations of God's will*, becauſe there can be no ſufficient reaſon given why the order of cauſes in nature ſhould be altered to expreſs the dependencies of things on each other; for herein a miracle would rather tend to weaken than ſtrengthen faith, becauſe the end of the miracle would be to confirm their faith as to events following upon their cauſes; but now the medium uſed for that end ſeems to prove the contrary, viz. that God can alter the ſeries of cauſes when he pleaſes himſelf, by working miracles, and therein going contrary to the courſe of nature; and therefore a miracle ſeems to be a very incongruous argument in this, becauſe itſelf is an evidence that may be, which it comes to prove ſhall not be. But when prophets come to declare the internal purpoſes of the will of God concerning future contingencies, no argument can be more ſuitable to demonſtrate the truth of what is ſpoken, than the working of a preſent miracle; for this demonſtrates to the ſenſes of men, that however unlikely the event may be to them which is foretold, yet with God all things are poſſible; and that it is very unlikely God would ſend ſuch a meſſenger to declare a falſehood, whom he entruſted with ſo great a power as that of working miracles. Thus it was in that remarkable prophecy concerning Joſias by the man of God at Bethel, 260 years before his birth; which though it were to come to paſs ſo long after, God confirmed it by a ſign, which was 1 Kings xiii. 3.

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the renting of the altar, and the pouring out of the aſhes upon it, and the withering of Jeroboam's hand. We cannot therefore in reaſon think that God would ſet ſo clear a ſeal to any deed which he did intend himſelf to cancel afterwards.

2. *Predictions expreſs God's inward purpoſe, when the things foretold do exceed all probabilities of ſecond cauſes*; in which caſe, though thoſe words of Tertullian ſeem very harſh, *credo quia impoſſibile*, yet, taking that impoſſibility as relating to ſecond cauſes, and the ground of faith to be ſome divine prediction, we ſee what reaſon there may be for them; for the more unlikely the thing is to be effected by ſecond cauſes, the greater evidence is it that the prophets in foretelling it did not reſpect the mere order of things in the world, but the unalterable counſels of the will of God; which therefore would certainly have their timely accompliſhments. When therefore any prophets did foretel things above the reach of natural cauſes, and thoſe things did not come to paſs, it was a certain evidence of a falſe prophet, as the contrary was of a true one; for none could know ſo long before-hand ſuch things as were above all human power, but ſuch to whom God himſelf, who alone was able to effect them, did reveal and communicate the knowledge of them. And hence we ſee in Scripture thoſe predictions, which have ſeemed to carry the greateſt improbabilities with them, have had the moſt punctual accompliſhments; as the Iſraelites returning out of Egypt at the end of 430 years: their deliverance by Cyrus after the captivity in Babylon, which ſeemed ſo improbable a thing, that when God ſpeaks of it, he uſhers it in with this preface, *That he fruſtrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh the diviners mad; but confirmeth the word of his ſervant, and performeth the counſel of his meſſengers, that ſaith to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be inhabited*, &c. The more unlikely then the thing was to come to paſs, the greater evidence there was in ſo clear a prophecy of

Gal. iii. 17. Iſa. xliv. 25, 26, 28.

of it so long before (above 100 years), and so exact a fulfilling of it afterwards precisely at the expiring of the seventy years from the first Captivity. CHAP. VI.

3. *Predictions concerning future events, which are confirmed by an oath from God himself, do express the immutable determinations of God's will.* For which we have the greatest assurance we can desire from that remarkable expression of the Apostle to the Hebrews, Heb. vi. 17, 18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation*, &c. Wherein the Apostle obviates and removes all doubts and misprisions, lest God after the declaring of his will should alter the event foretold in it; and that he doth, both by shewing that God had made an absolute promise, and withal, to prevent all doubts, lest some tacit condition might hinder performance, he tells us that God had annexed his oath to it; which two things were the most undoubted evidences of the immutability of God's counsel. The word ψεύδεσθαι here used, doth in Scripture often note the frustrating of men's hopes and expectations; so it is used Hab. iii. 17. ψεύσεται ἔργον ἐλαίας, we render it the *labour of the olive shall fail.* So Hos. ix. 2. καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἐψεύσατο αὐτούς, *and the new wine shall fail in her.* Thus the meaning here is, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should frustrate the expectations of men, or alter the events of things after he had declared them. For God's oath is an evident demonstration of the immutability of his will in all predictions to which this is annexed, and doth fully exclude that which the Scripture calls repenting in God, that is, doing otherwise than the words did seem to express, because of some tacit conditions understood in them. So we find Psal. lxxxix. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36. *If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod,* VI.

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and their iniquity with ſtripes; nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail; my covenant will I not break; nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David. His ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his throne as the ſun before me. Wherein we ſee what way God takes to aſſure us of the immutability of his covenant with his people, by the oath which he adjoins to his promiſes; whereby God doth moſt fully expreſs the unalterable determinations of his own will, in that he ſwears by his own holineſs, that he would not lie unto David, i. e. that he would faithfully perform what he had promiſed to him. And therefore Tertullian well ſaith, *Beati ſumus quorum cauſa Deus jurat, ſed miſeri & deteſtabiles ſi ne juranti quidem credimus.* It is happy for us unbelieving creatures, that God ſtoops ſo low as to confirm his covenant with an oath; but it will be ſad and miſerable for ſuch as dare not venture their faith upon it, when God hath annexed his oath unto it. It is thought by Expoſitors, that there is a peculiar emphaſis in thoſe words, אחת נשבעתי *Once have I ſworn*, thereby noting the irrevocable nature of God's oath, that there is no need of repetition of it, as among men; becauſe when once God ſwears by himſelf, it is the higheſt demonſtration that no conditions whatever ſhall alter his declared purpoſe. And therefore the Council of Toledo well explains the different nature of God's oath, and his repentance in Scriptures; *Jurare namque Dei eſt à ſe ordinata nullatenus convellere; pœnitere vero eadem ordinata cum voluerit immutare*; God is ſaid to ſwear when he binds himſelf abſolutely to performance; and to repent, when things fall out contrary to the declaration of God's will concerning them; for ſo it muſt be underſtood to be only *mutatio ſententiæ*, and not *conſilii*, that the alteration may be only in the things, and not in the eternal purpoſe of God. But ſince it is

Concil. Toletan. viii. c. 2.

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is evident in Scripture that many predictions do imply some tacit conditions, and many declarations of God's will do not express his internal purposes, it seemed necessary in those things which God did declare to be the irrevocable purposes of his will, there should be some peculiar mark and character set upon them for the confirmation of his people's faith; and this we find to be the annexing an oath to his promises. Thus it is in that grand instrument of peace between God and his people, the covenant of grace, wherein God was pleased so far to strengthen the faith of his people in it, that he ratifies the articles of peace therein contained, but especially the act of grace, on his own part with an oath, thereby to assure them it was never his purpose to repeal it, nor to fail of performance in it. For we are not to think that an oath lays any greater obligation upon God for performance, than the mere declaration of his will; it being a part of immutable justice, and consequently necessarily implied in the divine nature, to perform promises when once made: but God's oath respects us, and not himself, viz. that it might be a testimony unto us that God's will thereby declared is his eternal and unchangeable will, and so the mercies thereby promised are sure mercies; such as are ἀμεταμέλητα, *without any repentance on God's part.* Isa. lv. 3. CHAP. VI.

VII. 4. *Predictions made by the prophets concerning blessings merely spiritual, do express God's internal purpose, and therefore must have their certain accomplishment in the time prefixed by the prophets.* The grand reason of this proposition is, that the bestowing of blessings merely spiritual doth immediately flow from the grace and favour of God, and depend not upon conditions on our part as procuring causes of them; and therefore there can be no account given why God should suspend the performance of such promises, which would not more strongly have held why he should not have made any such promises at all. And therefore when we see that, notwithstanding the

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higheſt demerits, God made ſuch free promiſes, we can have no reaſon to think that any other demerits interpoſing between the promiſes and performance, ſhould hinder the accompliſhment of them; unleſs it be inſerted in the promiſes themſelves, which is contrary to the nature of free promiſes. Upon this ground all the promiſes relating to the Goſpel ſtate, and to the covenant of grace therein contained, muſt have their due accompliſhment in the time and manner prefixed by the prophets: and therefore the Jews are miſerably blind, when they ſuppoſe the reaſon why the promiſe of the Meſſias is yet deferred after ſo long expectation of him, is the ſins of their people; for this ſeems to ſuppoſe that God's promiſe of the Meſſias did depend upon their own righteouſneſs and worthineſs above all other people, which if it doth, they are like to be the moſt miſerable and deſperate people the world hath: and beſides, if God's intuition of ſin makes him defer the coming of the Meſſias, his foreſight of ſin would have hindered him from ever promiſing a Meſſias to come; but this was ſo far from being a hindrance of God's promiſe, that the main end of the coming of the Meſ-

Dan. ix. 24. ſias was *to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to make an end of ſin, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs.* And we ſee wherever the prophets inſiſt on the covenant of grace, the promiſe contained in it is *the blotting out of tranſgreſſions*, and *remembering ſins no more*, and that merely on the account of God's free love and for his own name's ſake. This can be no reaſon then why predictions concerning ſpiritual bleſſings ſhould not have their exact accompliſhment; becauſe there can be no bar againſt free love, and the beſtowing of ſuch mercies which do ſuppoſe the greateſt unworthineſs of them, as Goſpel bleſſings do.

VIII. The great difficulty lies in explaining the prophetical phraſes concerning the Goſpel ſtate, which ſeem to intimate a greater advancement, and flouriſhing of peace and holineſs therein, than hath as yet been ſeen

ſeen in the Chriſtian world; which gives the Jews the greater occaſion to imagine that the ſtate ſo much ſpoken of by the prophets, is not yet eſtabliſhed in the world. But all the difficulty herein ariſeth from the want of conſideration of the idiotiſms of the prophetical language, eſpecially where it reſpects the ſtate of things under the Goſpel; concerning which we may obſerve theſe following rules.

1. *The prophets under the Old Teſtament, when they ſpeak of things to come to paſs in the New, do ſet them forth by the repreſentation of ſuch things as were then in uſe among themſelves.* Thus the ſpiritual worſhip of the Goſpel is propheſied of under the notion of the legal worſhip among the Jews; the converſion of Egypt to the Goſpel, is foretold Iſaiah xix. 19, 21. by the ſetting up an altar, and *offering ſacrifice to the Lord*; and the *converſion of the Gentiles* in general, by the *offering up of incenſe*, Mal. i. 11. and the ſervice of God under the Goſpel, is ſet forth by *going up to Jeruſalem, and keeping the feaſt of tabernacles there*, Zach. xiv. 16. and the *plentiful effuſion of the Spirit of God in the miraculous gifts*, which attended the preaching of the Goſpel, is ſet forth by the prophet, Joel ii. 28. by *propheſying, and dreaming dreams, and ſeeing viſions*: not that theſe things ſhould really be under Goſpel times, but that the prophet's meaning might be the better underſtood by thoſe he ſpake unto, he ſets forth the great meaſure of gifts and Goſpel light under thoſe things which were accounted as the higheſt attainments among themſelves. So the great meaſure and degree of holineſs, which was to be under Goſpel times, is ſet forth by the prophet Zachary, Zach. xiv. 20. by the placing of the motto which was among the Jews only upon the *high prieſt's forehead*, that this ſhould be ſo common under the Goſpel, that even *the bells of the horſes ſhould bear it*, i. e. thoſe things which ſeem moſt remote from a ſpiritual uſe ſhould be devoted to it, as the bells were, whch were commonly hanged upon their war-horſes in

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in thoſe mountainous countries; and in the latter part of that verſe the height and progreſs of Goſpel holineſs is deſcribed under that phraſe, *That the pots in the Lord's houſe ſhould be as bowls before the altar*, i. e. ſhould be advanced from a lower and more ignoble ſervice, to a higher and more ſpiritual degree of holineſs. Now the Jews, when they obſerve theſe and many other prophetical paſſages relating to the time of the Meſſias to run in the old ſtrain of the law, they preſently conclude that the Meſſias muſt not innovate any thing concerning their way of worſhip, but only be ſome great prince to give them temporal deliverances, and ſo expound all theſe texts in a literal ſenſe, which were only expreſſed in ſuch a ſtrain, the better to help the capacities of thoſe they ſpake them to.

2. *Things abſolutely foretold to come to paſs in Goſpel times in a general manner, are to be underſtood comparatively in reference to what was before.* For when the meaſure of their grace or knowledge was ſo far above what was then among the Jews, that there was ſcarce any proportion between them, the prophets made uſe of ſuch expreſſions to ſet it forth by, which might raiſe up the dull apprehenſion of the Jews to conceive the juſt meaſure and fulneſs of it. Thus when the prophets foretel the grand increaſe of ſpiritual knowledge in Goſpel times, they do it in this phraſe, *They ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord, for all ſhall know me from the leaſt to the greateſt*, Jer. xxxi. 33. Where it was far from the prophet's meaning to exclude all uſe of teaching under the Goſpel (which is contrary to the end of all the ordinances of the Goſpel), but becauſe teaching doth commonly ſuppoſe great ignorance, he ſets forth the abundance of knowledge which ſhould be then, by the excluſion of that which doth imply it. So when it is ſaid, that *they ſhall all be taught of God*, the meaning is not, that every one that lives in the Goſpel ſtate ſhould

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ſhould be thus effectually taught by the Spirit of God, but that the number of ſuch under the Goſpel ſhould ſo far exceed thoſe under the Law, that they could hardly apprehend the diſproportion between them, unleſs it had been ſet forth in ſo large an expreſſion. Which leads me to the next rule.

3. *Things foretold as univerſally or indefinitely to come to paſs under the Goſpel, are to be underſtood as to the duty of all, but as to the event only of God's choſen people.* Thus when there is ſo great peace propheſied to be in Goſpel times, that then *men ſhould beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and ſpears into pruning-hooks; that the wolf ſhould lie down with the lamb, and leopard with the kid; that nation ſhould not lift up ſword againſt nation, nor learn war any more*; with many others to the ſame purpoſe; all theſe ſpeeches are to be underſtood of what the nature and deſign of the Goſpel tends to, and what is the duty of all that profeſs it, and what would effectually be in the Chriſtian world, did all that profeſs the Chriſtian doctrine heartily obey the dictates of it; and ſo far as the Goſpel doth prevail upon any, it ſo far cicurates their wild and unruly natures, that of furious wolves they become innocent lambs, and of raging lions tender kids; ſo far from hurting and injuring others, that they dare not entertain any thoughts of ill-will or revenge towards their greateſt enemies. And thus we may ſee, that notwithſtanding the ſeeming repugnancies of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament concerning the ſtate of the New, with the events which have been obſerved in it, yet that all thoſe predictions which concerned the beſtowing of the ſpiritual bleſſings which concerned the Goſpel ſtate, have had their punctual accompliſhment in the ſenſe they were intended. Iſa. ii. 4. xi. 6, 7.

4. *Predictions concerning future events, where not only the thing itſelf is foretold, but the ſeveral circumſtances of perſons, time, and place enumerated, are to have their due accompliſhment, and conſequently expreſs God's inward purpoſes.* For thoſe promiſes or comminations IX. which

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which are capable of alteration by ſome tacit conditions implied in them, do moſt commonly run in general terms, or elſe are ſpoken by way of immediate addreſs to the perſons concerned, in order to the ſtirring them up the more to the duty God aims at by thoſe comminations; as when Jonas limited the Ninevites' deſtruction to forty days. But when prophecies are recorded, not by way of commination, but mere prediction, and particular circumſtances ſet down, it ſtands to reaſon that ſuch prophecies muſt have their certain accompliſhment: and that firſt, becauſe God by ſetting down the circumſtances would give them greater evidences that the predictions came from himſelf; as when the prophet at Bethel not only foretold the deſtruction of the altar there, but particularly named the man that ſhould do it, viz. Joſias. So when God by Iſaiah called Cyrus by name, it was doubtleſs a great confirmation to them that the deliverance of the Jews ſhould be by that perſon. Secondly, becauſe the circumſtances are intended for land-marks to know the certainty of the accompliſhment of the prophecy; for when they find the circumſtances fall out exactly according to the prediction, they have no ground to queſtion the accompliſhment of the prophecy. And hence it was that in the grand prophecy of the coming of the Meſſias, all particular circumſtances were ſo long before foretold. The firſt dawning of his day being to Adam after his fall, when the nature he ſhould be born of was foretold, viz. not angelical but human, of the ſeed of the woman. To Abraham it was further revealed of what nation of mankind, viz. from his poſterity; to Jacob at what time, when the *ſceptre ſhould be departed from Judah*; and from what tribe, viz. Judah; to David of what family in that tribe, viz. his own; to Iſaiah of what perſon in that family, a virgin; to Micah in what place, viz. Bethlehem; and to Daniel at what preciſe time, toward the expiring of his ſeventy weeks; which, according to the moſt probable computation of them, did commence

mence from the ſeventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus; and ſo the 490 years expired near upon our Saviour's Paſſion. Now certainly the particular enumeration of all theſe circumſtances ſpoken of ſo long before, and falling out ſo exactly, could not but give the greateſt conviction and evidence that our bleſſed Saviour was that perſon ſo much ſpoken of by the prophets, in whom all theſe ſeveral lines did meet as in their centre. CHAP. VI.

5. Laſtly, *Predictions then expreſs divine purpoſes, when many prophets in ſeveral ages concur in the ſame predictions*; becauſe it is hardly ſeen but all thoſe tacit conditions which are ſuppoſed in general promiſes or comminations may be altered in different ages; but when the conditions alter, and the predictions continue the ſame, it is a ſtronger evidence, it is ſome immutable counſel of God which is expreſſed in thoſe predictions. And in this caſe one prediction confirms the foregoing, as the Jews ſay of prophets: *One prophet that hath the teſtimony of another prophet, is ſuppoſed to be true*; but it muſt be with this ſuppoſition, that the other prophet was before approved to be a true prophet. Now both theſe meet in the prophecies concerning our Saviour; for to him bear all the prophets witneſs: and in their ſeveral ages they had ſeveral things revealed to them concerning him; and the uniformity and perfect harmony of all theſe ſeveral prophecies by perſons at ſo great diſtance from each other, and being of ſeveral intereſts and employments, and in ſeveral places, yet all giving light to each other, and exactly meeting at laſt in the accompliſhment, do give us yet a further and clearer evidence that all thoſe ſeveral beams came from the ſame ſun; when all thoſe ſcattered rays were at laſt gathered into one body again, at the appearance of the ſun of righteouſneſs in the world.

Thus have we now cleared when predictions are expreſſive of God's internal purpoſes; by obſervation X.

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tion of which rules we may eaſily reſolve the other part of the difficulty, when they only expreſs the ſeries and dependencies of things which would have their iſſue and accompliſhment, if God by his immediate hand of Providence did not cut off the entail of effects upon their natural cauſes. Now as to theſe prophecies which concern things conſidered in themſelves, and not preciſely as they are in the counſel of God, we are to obſerve theſe rules.

1. *Comminations of judgments to come do not in themſelves ſpeak the abſolute futurity of the event, but do only declare what the perſons to whom they are made are to expect, and what ſhall certainly come to paſs, unleſs God by his mercy interpoſe between the threatening and the event.* So that comminations do ſpeak only the *debitum pœnæ*, and the neceſſary obligation to puniſhment; but therein God doth not bind up himſelf as he doth in abſolute promiſes: the reaſon is, becauſe comminations confer no right to any, which abſolute promiſes do; and therefore God is not bound to neceſſary performance of what he threatens. Indeed the guilt, or obligation to puniſhment is neceſſary, where the offence hath been committed to which the threatening was annexed; but the execution of that puniſhment doth ſtill depend upon God's arbitrarious will, and therefore he may ſuſpend or remove it upon ſerious addreſſes made to himſelf in order to it. For ſince God was pleaſed not to take the preſent forfeiture of the firſt grand tranſgreſſion, but made ſuch a relaxation of that penal law, that conditions of pardon were admittable, notwithſtanding ſentence paſſed upon the malefactors, there is ſtrong ground of preſumption in human nature, that God's forbearance of mankind notwithſtanding ſin doth ſuppoſe his readineſs to pardon offenders upon their repentance; and therefore that all particular threatenings of judgments to come do ſuppoſe incorrigibleneſs in thoſe they are pronounced againſt: upon which the foundation

foundation of hope is built, that if timely repentance do intervene, God will remove thoſe judgments which are threatened againſt them. CHAP. VI.

And this was certainly the caſe of the Ninevites upon Jonas's preaching among them. For when the threatening was ſo peremptory, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh ſhall be deſtroyed*, all the hope they could have of pardon muſt be from the general perſuaſions of men's ſouls of God's readineſs to remove judgments upon repentance: for otherwiſe there had been no place for any thing but deſpair, and not the leaſt encouragement to ſupplicate the mercy of God, which we ſee they did in a moſt ſolemn manner, after they were convinced theſe comminations came from God himſelf by the mouth of his prophet. Some think that Jonas, together with the threatening of judgment, did intermix exhortations to repentance; but we can find no probability at all for that on theſe two accounts: Firſt, Jonas then would not have been ſo unwilling to have undertaken this meſſage; for, as far as we can ſee, the harſhneſs of it was the main reaſon he ſought to have avoided it by flying to Tarſhiſh. Secondly, Jonas would have had no pretence at all for his anger, and diſpleaſure at God's pardoning Nineveh; which is moſt probably conceived to have been becauſe the Ninevites might now ſuſpect him to be no true prophet, becauſe the event anſwered not his prediction. Now there had been no reaſon at all for this, if he had mixed promiſes together with his threatenings; for then nothing would have fallen out contrary to his own predictions. And therefore it ſeems evident that the meſſage Jonas was ſent with, was only the commination of their ſpeedy ruin, which God did on purpoſe to awaken them the ſooner, and with greater earneſtneſs to repentance, when the judgment was denounced in ſo peremptory a manner; although it ſeems Jonas had before ſuch apprehenſions of the *merciful nature of God*, and his readineſs to pardon, that he might ſuppoſe XI. Jonah iii. 4. Jonah iv. 2.

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XII. And by this we may further underſtand the denunciation of death to Hezekiah by the prophet Iſaiah, *Set thy houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die and not live.* I queſtion not but the prophet revealed to Hezekiah as much as God had revealed to him (for to ſay, as Molinæus doth, that the prophet ſpake theſe words of his own head, before he fully underſtood God's mind, is very harſh and incongruous); but God might at firſt diſcover to Iſaiah not his internal purpoſe, but what the nature of the diſeaſe would bring him to (unleſs his own immediate hand of Providence interpoſed); which meſſage he would have Iſaiah carry to Hezekiah for the trial of his faith, and exciting him to the more lively acts of grace, and for a further demonſtration of God's goodneſs to him, in prolonging his life beyond human probability, and the courſe of ſecond cauſes. Now what repugnancy is there to the truth and faithfulneſs of God, that God ſhould conceal from his prophets in their meſſages the internal purpoſes of his will, and, in order to the doing good to men, ſhould only reveal what would certainly have come to paſs, unleſs himſelf had otherwiſe determined it. And thus the repentance which is attributed to God in reference to theſe denunciations of judgments, is far from importing any real mutation in the internal purpoſes of God (a rock ſome have ſplit themſelves upon), but it only ſignifies the outward changing of the ſcene towards men, and acting otherwiſe than the words

Ma xxxviii. 1.

Molin. Vates, l. i. c. 26.

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words of the prophets did ſeem to import; and all the alteration is in the outward diſcovery of his will, which is certainly far from being any colluſion in God: unleſs we muſt ſuppoſe God ſo bound up, that he hath no liberty of uſing his own methods for bringing men to repentance, or for trial of his people's graces, but muſt in every inſtance of his word declare nothing but his own internal purpoſes; which is contrary to the general method of God's dealing with the world, which is, to govern men by his own laws, and thereby to awaken them to duty, and deter from ſin by his annexed threatenings, without revealing any thing of his internal purpoſes concerning the ſtate and condition of any particular perſons at all; which threatenings of his, though pronounced with the greateſt ſeverity, do not ſpeak God's inward reſolutions as to any particular perſon, but what all muſt expect, if they continue impenitent and incorrigible. For the only condition implied in theſe threatenings being repentance, it neceſſarily follows, that, where that is wanting, theſe hypothetical comminations are abſolute predictions of what ſhall certainly come to paſs on all thoſe who are deſtitute of the condition ſuppoſed in them. CHAP. VI.

XIII. So that where any comminations are pronounced by any in a prophetical way concerning any perſon or people, and no alteration happen at all in them, but they continue impenitent and incorrigible, there the not coming of them to paſs may be a token of a falſe prophet; for in this caſe the only tacit condition implied in theſe threatening prophecies is ſuppoſed to be wanting, and ſo the comminations muſt be underſtood as abſolute predictions. Now in thoſe comminations in Scripture which are abſolutely expreſſed, but conditionally underſtood, we find ſomething interpoſing, which we may rationally ſuppoſe was the very condition underſtood. As Abimelech's reſtoring of Sarah was the ground why the ſentence of death, after it was denounced, was not executed Gen. xx. 8.

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upon him: so Ahab's humiliation, Hezekiah's earnest prayer, the Ninevites' repentance, all interposed between sentence and execution; whereby we may be fully satisfied of the reason why these denunciations did not take effect: but where the persons continue the same after threatenings that they were before, there is no reason why the sentence should be suspended, unless we should suppose it to be a mere effect of the patience and long-suffering of God, leading men to repentance and amendment of life: which is the ground the Jews give, why the not fulfilling of denunciations of judgment was never accounted sufficient to prove a man a false prophet. To which purpose these words of Maimonides are observable in his *Jesude Thorah*, where he treats particularly on the subject of prophecies: *If a prophet foretel sad things, as the death of any one, or famine, or war, or the like; if these things come not to pass, he shall not be accounted a false prophet: neither let them say, Behold he hath foretold, and it comes not to pass; for our blessed God is slow to anger, and rich in mercy, and repenteth of the evil; and it may be that they repent, and God may spare them, as he did the Ninevites, or defer the punishment, as he did Hezekiah's.* Thus we see that prophetical comminations do not express God's internal purposes; and therefore the event may not come to pass, and yet the prophet be a true prophet.

1 Kings xxi. 29.

Maim. de Fund Leg. c. 10. s. 6.

XIV. 2. *Predictions concerning temporal blessings do not always absolutely speak the certainty of the event, but what God is ready to do, if they to whom they are made continue faithful to him:* for which we have sufficient ground from that place of Jeremiah xviii. 9, 10. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* So Isaiah i. 19, 20. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Whereby

Whereby we ſee it evident that all promiſes of temporal bleſſings are not to be taken abſolutely, but with the condition of obedience. But this the Jews can by no means digeſt, whoſe rule is, that all prophecies of good things to come muſt neceſſarily come to paſs, or he was no true prophet who ſpake them: *For*, ſaith Maimonides, *whatever good thing God hath promiſed, although it be promiſed under a condition, he never revokes it; and we never find that God repented him of any good thing promiſed, but in the deſtruction of the firſt temple, when God had promiſed to the righteous they ſhould not die with the wicked; but he repented him of his words.* But it is very plain to any one that conſiders the Jewiſh interpretations of Scripture, that in them they have always an eye to themſelves, and will be ſure not to underſtand thoſe Scriptures which ſeem to thwart their own intereſt, as is moſt apparent in the preſent caſe; for the grand reaſon why the Jews inſiſt ſo much on the punctual accompliſhment of all promiſes of good to be the ſign of a true prophet, is to uphold their own intereſt in thoſe temporal bleſſings which are propheſied of concerning them in the Old Teſtament; although one would think the want of correſpondency in the event in reference to themſelves, might make them a little more tender of the honour of thoſe prophecies which they acknowledge to be divine; and have appeared to be ſo in nothing more than the full accompliſhment of all thoſe threatenings which are denounced againſt them for their diſobedience, even by the mouth of Moſes himſelf, Deut. xxviii. from the 15th to the end. Can any thing be more plain and evident, than that the enjoyment of all the privileges conferred upon them, did depend upon the condition of their continuing faithful to God's covenant? The only place of Scripture produced by them with any plauſibility, is that Jer. xxviii. 9. *The prophet which propheſieth of peace, when the word of the prophet ſhall come to paſs, then* Ibid. f. 7, 8.

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tion in them. So we have finiſhed our firſt propoſition, concerning the manner of trying Divine revelation in the prophets God ſent among his people. CHAP. VI.

We now come to the ſecond general propoſition concerning the prophets. *Thoſe prophets, whom God did employ upon ſome extraordinary meſſage for confirming the truth of the religion eſtabliſhed by him, had a power of miracles conferred upon them in order to that end.* So that we muſt diſtinguiſh the ordinary employment of prophets, which was either inſtruction, or prediction of future events among God's own people, from their peculiar meſſages, when they were ſent to give evidence to the truth of that way of religion which was then ſettled by God's own appointment. Now the prophets generally did ſuppoſe the truth of their religion, as owned by thoſe they were ſent to; and therefore it had been very needleſs employing a power of miracles among them, to convince them of that which they believed already. For we never read, among all the revolts of the people of the Jews, that they were lapſed ſo far as totally to reject the law of Moſes (which had been to alter the conſtitution of their commonwealth), although they did enormouſly offend againſt the precepts of it, and that in thoſe things wherein the honour of God was mainly concerned, as is moſt plain in their frequent and groſs idolatry; which we are not ſo to underſtand as though they wholly caſt off the worſhip of the true God, but they ſuperinduced (as the Samaritans did) the worſhip of Heathen idols with that of the God of Iſrael. But when the revolt grew ſo great and dangerous that it was ready to ſwallow up the true worſhip of God, unleſs ſome apparent evidence were given of the falſity of thoſe Heathen mixtures, and further confirmation of the truth of the eſtabliſhed religion, it pleaſed God ſometimes to ſend his prophets on this peculiar meſſage to the main inſtruments of this revolt: as is moſt conſpicuous in that dangerous deſign of Jeroboam, when he, out of a XV. 2. Prop.

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politic end, ſet up his two calves in oppoſition to the Temple at Jeruſalem; and therein it was the more dangerous, in that in all probability he deſigned not the alteration of the worſhip itſelf, but the eſtabliſhment of it in Dan and Bethel: for his intereſt lay not in drawing of the people from the worſhip of God, but from his worſhip at Jeruſalem; which was contrary to his deſign of cantonizing the kingdom, and taking the greateſt ſhare to himſelf. Now that God might confirm his people's faith in this dangerous juncture of time, he ſends a prophet to Bethel, who, by the working of preſent miracles there, viz. *the renting the altar, and withering of Jeroboam's hand*, did manifeſt to them that theſe altars were diſpleaſing to God, and that the true place of worſhip was at Jeruſalem. So in that famous fire-ordeal for trying the truth of religion between God and Baal upon Mount Carmel by Elijah, God was pleaſed in a miraculous way to give the moſt pregnant teſtimony to the truth of his own worſhip, by cauſing a fire to come down from heaven and *conſume the ſacrifice*; by which the prieſts of Baal were confounded, and the people confirmed in the belief of the only true God: for preſently, upon the ſight of this miracle, the people fall on their faces, and ſay, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God.* Whereby we plainly ſee what clear evidence is given to the truth of that religion, which is atteſted with a power of miracles. Thus the widow of Sarepta, which was in the country of Zidon, was brought to believe Elijah to be a true prophet, by his raiſing up her ſon to life. And the woman ſaid to Elijah, *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord by thy mouth is truth.* So we ſee how Naaman was convinced of the true God by his miraculous cure in Jordan by the appointment of Eliſha, *Behold now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Iſrael*; by which inſtances it is demonſtrable, that either the faith of all theſe perſons was built upon weak and

1 Kings xii. 27.

1 Kings xiii. 2.

1 Kings xviii. 38.

1 Kings xviii. 39.

1 Kings xvii. 24.

2 Kings v. 15.

inſufficient

insufficient grounds, or that a power of miracles is an evident confirmation of the truth of that religion which is established by them. For this we see was the great end for which God did employ any of his prophets to work miracles, viz. to be as an evident demonstration of the truth of what was revealed by him. So that this power of miracles is not merely a motive of credibility, or a probable inducement to remove prejudice from the person, as many of our Divines speak, but it doth contain an evident demonstration to common sense, of the truth of that religion which is confirmed by them. CHAP. VI.

XVI. And thus we assert it to have been in the case of Moses; the truth of whose message was attested both among the Egyptians and the Israelites, by that power of miracles which he had. But herein we have the great patrons of Moses our greatest enemies, viz. the present Jews, who by reason of their enmity to the doctrine of Christ, which was attested by unparalleled miracles, are grown very shy of the argument drawn from thence; insomuch that their great doctor Maimonides lays down this for a confident maxim, משה רבינו לא האמינו בו ישראל מפני האותות: *the Israelites did not believe in Moses our Master for the sake of the miracles which he wrought.* Did they not? the more shame for them; and if they did, the more shame for this great Rabbi thus to belie them. But the reason he gives for it is, *Because there may remain some suspicion in one's mind, that all miracles may be wrought by a power of magic or incantation.* Say ye so? What, when Moses confounded all the magicians in Egypt, and made themselves, who were the most cunning in these things, confess it was the finger of God, and at last give out as not able to stand before Moses? Might one still suspect all this to be done by a magical power? *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.* This is much like what another of their doctors says, whom they call the Divine Philosopher, that Elisha's raising the child to life, and curing Naaman's leprosy; Maim. de Fund. Leg. c. 8. f. 3. Jos. Albo. l. i. c. 18.

BOOK II. leproſy; and Daniel's eſcaping the lions, and Jonas out of the whale's belly, might all come to paſs by the influence of the ſtars, or by pythoniſm. Very probable! But it is moſt true which G. Vortius there obſerves of the Jews, *Nihil non nugaciſſimi mortalium fingunt ne cogantur agnoſcere virtute ac digito quaſi ipſius Dei Jeſum noſtrum effeciſſe miracula ſua.* All their deſign in this is, only to leſſen the miracles of our bleſſed Saviour, and to derogate all they can from the belief of them. Hence they tell us, that nothing is ſo eaſy to be done as miracles. The mere recital of the Tetragrammaton will work wonders; and that by this Jeremiah and our Saviour did all their miracles. It is well yet that he did no more than one of their own prophets had done before him: but where, I wonder, do we read that ever the pronouncing of four letters raiſed one from the dead, who had lain four days in the grave? Or by what power did Chriſt raiſe himſelf from the dead? (which was the greateſt miracle of all.) Could his dead body pronounce the Tetragrammaton to awaken itſelf with? But Maimonides further tells us, that the miracles which Moſes wrought among the Iſraelites were merely for neceſſity, and not to prove the truth of his Divine commiſſion; for which he inſtanceth in dividing the Red Sea, the raining of Manna, and the deſtruction of Corah and his complices. But ſetting aſide that theſe two latter were the immediate hand of God, and not miracles done by Moſes, yet it is evident that the intent of them was to manifeſt a Divine preſence among them: and in the trial of Corah Moſes appeals to God's immediate Providence, to manifeſt whether God had immediately employed him or no: for it is evident by the text, that the main charge they laid againſt Moſes, was ambition and uſurpation. *Is it a ſmall thing, ſay they, that thou haſt brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderneſs, except thou make thyſelf altogether a prince over us?* Whereby it is evi-

Numb. xvi. 13.

dent

dent they thought that Moſes acted out of a private design, and aimed at his own honour and authority; which was an imputation of the higheſt nature that could be alledged againſt him. Now ſee how Moſes proceeds to clear himſelf (which is ſufficient to ſtop the mouths of theſe incredulous Jews); for he lays the greateſt evidence of his Divine commiſſion upon a preſent miracle. And Moſes ſaid, *Hereby ſhall ye know that the Lord hath ſent me to do all theſe works; for I have not done them of mine own mind: if theſe men die the common death of all men, then the Lord hath not ſent me*, &c. Can any thing be more plain than that the only intent of this miracle was to make it appear, that Moſes took not his office upon him, but was immediately ſent and employed by God in what he did? But that which will put an end to this controverſy, is, God's giving Moſes a power to work miracles, for that very end that the Iſraelites ſhould believe him, Exodus viii. 8, 9. And can we think they would have ever left Egypt as they did, and followed Moſes into the wilderneſs, unleſs they had been fully convinced he was a deliverer ſent from God? It is true (that which the Jews ſpeak ſo much of) the *ſtatio in monte Sina* was a great confirmation both to their own faith and to Moſes's, according to what God had told him, Exod. iii. 12. but yet it follows not hence they had no firm bottom for their faith to ſtand on before (for then they might have been drowned in the Red Sea as well as the Egyptians); but God knowing their incredulity, and readineſs to diſobey his law, did at the promulgation of it teſtify to their eyes and ears his own preſence in the midſt of them. And this certainly was one of the greateſt miracles of all; and therefore to oppoſe this to the evidence that is produced by miracles, is only to oppoſe a power of working miracles to a power of doing them. So vain and empty then, ſo falſe and fallacious, yea ſo directly contrary to Holy Scripture is that axiom of the Jews, *Prophetiæ veritas non*

CHAP. VI.

V. 28, 29.

Exod. xix. 9.

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non confirmatur miraculis: for miracles are ſufficient evidences of Divine revelation in any whom God employs, to all but ſuch as are reſolved not to believe them; and as one well ſaith, *Pertinaciæ nullum remedium poſuit Deus*; *God never works miracles to convince obſtinate Atheiſts and wilful Infidels.* This now is the firſt caſe wherein miracles are to be expected; which is, when God employs any upon an extraordinary meſſage, to be as credentials to confirm their Divine commiſſion.

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CHAP. VII.

The Eternity of the Law of Moſes diſcuſſed.

I. *The ſecond Caſe wherein Miracles may be expected; when a Divine poſitive Law is to be repealed, and another way of Worſhip eſtabliſhed inſtead of it. The Poſſibility in general of a Repeal of a Divine Law aſſerted; the particular Caſe of the Law of* Moſes *diſputed againſt the* Jews: II. *The Matter of that Law proved not to be immutably obligatory; becauſe the ceremonial Precepts were required not for themſelves, but for ſome further End; that proved from* Maimonides's *Confeſſion:* III. *The Precepts of the Ceremonial Law frequently diſpenſed with while the Law was in Force. Of the Paſſover of* Hezekiah, *and ſeveral other Inſtances.* IV. *It is not inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom of God to repeal ſuch an eſtabliſhed Law.* Abravanel's *Arguments anſwered.* V. *Of the Perfection of the Law of* Moſes, *compared with the Goſpel.* VI. *Whether God hath ever declared he would never repeal the Law of* Moſes. VII. *Of adding to the Precepts.* VIII. *Of the Expreſſions ſeeming to imply the Perpetuity of the Law of* Moſes. *Reaſons aſſigned why thoſe Expreſſions are uſed, though Perpetuity be not implied.* IX. *The Law of* Moſes *not built upon immutable Reaſon, becauſe many particular Precepts were founded upon particular Occaſions, as the Cuſtoms of the* Zabii; X. *many ceremonial Precepts thence deduced out of* Maimonides; XI. *and becauſe ſuch a State of Things was foretold, with which the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law would be inconſiſtent.* XII. *That largely diſcovered from the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament.*

I NOW come to the ſecond caſe wherein miracles may be juſtly expected; which is, *When ſomething which hath been before eſtabliſhed by Divine law is to be* CHAP. VII. 1.

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be repealed, and ſome other way of worſhip to be ſet up inſtead of it. Two things are very neceſſary to be ſpoken to for the clearing of this propoſition: Firſt, *Whether a law once eſtabliſhed by God himſelf, be capable of a repeal?* Secondly, *What neceſſity there is of miracles to manifeſt God's intention of repealing a former law?* Theſe two contain the main foundation of the diſpute between the Jews and us, viz. *Whether the law of Moſes was ever to be laid aſide, and whether the miracles of our Bleſſed Saviour were ſufficient evidences of God's intention by him to repeal the former law eſtabliſhed by Moſes?* I begin with the firſt, Whether a Divine law in general, or the law of Moſes in particular, may be abrogated or repealed, after God himſelf hath made it evident that the promulgation of it was from himſelf? This muſt be confeſſed the ſtrongeſt and moſt plauſible plea the preſent Jews have for their infidelity, and therefore the eternity of the law of Moſes is made by them one of the fundamental articles of their preſent Creed, and is pleaded for with the greateſt ſubtlety by their great R. Abravanel, who ſpends his whole 13th chapter *de Capite Fidei* upon it; but with what ſucceſs, will be ſeen in our clearing of it. There are but three things can be ſuppoſed as the grounds why a law, once promulged by God himſelf, ſhould not be capable of repeal; and thoſe are either firſt, *Becauſe the things themſelves commanded in that law are of ſuch a nature that they are not capable of being diſpenſed with*; or ſecondly, *that it is not conſiſtent with the wiſdom of God to repeal a law once eſtabliſhed*; or thirdly, *that the reaſon of the law continuing always the ſame, it would argue mutability in God to revoke that law, and eſtabliſh another inſtead of it:* if we can therefore demonſtrate, *that the matter of the law of Moſes is of a poſitive and mutable nature, that it is ſuitable to the wiſdom of God to alter it*, and *that ſufficient account in reaſon may be given for the alteration of it*, then there can be no imaginable neceſſity that a law once having God for its author, muſt

must therefore derive from him an eternal and immutable obligation. CHAP. VII.

II.

First, then, as to the matter of the law: and here it must be supposed, that, in the matter of controversy between us and the Jews, the question is not of any of those things which are therefore commanded, because they are intrinsically good, as the precepts of the natural or moral law, but of those things which are therefore only good because God commands them, i. e. things merely positive, whose worth and value ariseth not from the intrinsic weight of the things, but from the external impress of Divine authority upon them. Now it is no question on either hand, whether God may require these things or no, nor whether these things will be acceptable unto God, so long as he requires them; but whether, when once required, the obligation to them can never cease. Such kind of things among the Jews we suppose all the rites and ceremonies of the law to be, viz. circumcision, distinction of meats and days, customs of sacrificing, and such like; and whatever other laws respected them as a distinct and peculiar commonwealth. All these we say are such as do not carry an immutable obligation along with them; and that on these accounts.

1. First, *Because these things are not primarily required for themselves, but in order to some further end.* Things that are required upon their own account carry an indispensable obligation in them to their performance; but where things are commanded not for themselves, but the legislator doth express some particular grounds of requiring them, there the end and intention of the legislator is the measure of their obligation. To which purpose Maimonides excellently speaks, when he says, *That the particular manner of worship among the Jews, as sacrifices and oblations, were secundum intentionem secundam Dei, God's secondary intention and design; but prayer, invocation, and the like, were nearer God's primary intention. Now,* saith he, Maimon, More Nev. l. iii. c. 32.

for

BOOK II. *for the firſt, they are no further acceptable to God, than as all the circumſtances of time, place, and perſons are obſerved, which are preſcribed by God himſelf; but the latter are acceptable in any perſon, time, or place. And for this cauſe,* ſaith he, *it is that we find the prophets often reproving men for their too great ſedulity in bringing oblations, and inculcating this to them, that God did not intend theſe as the principal inſtances of his worſhip, and that God did not need any of theſe things.* So 1 Sam. xv. 22. *Behold, to obey is better than ſacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.* Iſa. i. 11. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me? ſaith the Lord.* And eſpecially Jerem. vii. 22, 23. *For I ſpake not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings; but this thing I commanded them, ſaying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.* Of which words Maimonides ſaith, *Scrupulum moverunt omnibus, quos mihi videre aut audire contigit*; for ſay they, How can it be that God did not command them concerning ſacrifices, when a great part of the law is about them? But Maimonides well reſolves the doubt thus: *That God's primary intention, and that which he chiefly looked at, was obedience; but God's intention in ſacrifices and oblations was only to teach them the chief thing, which was obedience.* This then is of the number of thoſe things which are ſpoken abſolutely, but to be underſtood comparatively; as, *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice. My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me. It is not you that ſpeak, but the Holy Ghoſt,* &c. So that we ſee all the goodneſs which is in theſe things is conveyed into them by that which is morally good, which is obedience; and God did never regard the performance of thoſe laws any further than as it was an expreſſion of obedience, and it was conjoined with thoſe other moral duties which were moſt agreeable to the Divine nature. And in this ſenſe many underſtood that difficult place, Ezek. xx. 25. *And I gave*

gave them חקים לא טובים *ſtatutes that were not good,* i. e. ſay they, *comparatively with theſe things which were ſimply and in themſelves good*; to which purpoſe they give this rule: *Aliquid negatur ineſſe alicui, quod alterius comparatione exiſtimatur exiguum.* But I rather think that which the Chaldee paraphraſt ſuggeſts, and others explain further, to be the meaning of that place, viz. that by the precepts that were not good, is meant the cruel and tyrannical impoſitions of thoſe enemies God for their ſins did deliver them over to, which were far from being acceptable to them; which is frequently the ſenſe of good in Scripture. Thus we ſee one reaſon why the ceremonial precepts do not in themſelves imply an immutable obligation, becauſe they are not commanded for themſelves, but in order to a further end. CHAP. VII.

2. *Becauſe God hath frequently diſpenſed with the ceremonial precepts when they were in greateſt force, if the end of them could be attained without them.* Thus the precept of circumciſion ſlept during the Iſraelites' travels in the wilderneſs; thus David ate of the *ſhew-bread*, which is expreſsly forbidden in the law. The Jews think to evade this, by diſtinguiſhing between the bread of confeſſion in the euchariſtical offering, mentioned Leviticus vii. 13. and the proper *ſhew-bread.* Now they ſay David ate only of the firſt, and not of the ſecond: but this is *gloſſa Aurelianenſis*, which overthrows the text; for it is expreſsly ſaid, that the ground why the prieſt gave him holy bread, was becauſe there was none there but לחם הפנים, *the ſhew-bread*, 1 Sam. xxi. 6. A like violation of the law, without reproof, is commonly ſuppoſed by the Jews to have been in the ſiege of Jericho, viz. in the caſe of the Sabbath. But it is more plain in that *anomalous paſſover* obſerved by Hezekiah, which many of the Jews themſelves acknowledge was not obſerved as the *ſecond paſſover*, provided by the law to be celebrated on the 14th day of the *ſecond month by thoſe who were debarred of the firſt for their legal* III. Exod. xxix. 33. Numb. ix. 11.

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legal uncleanneſs; but they ſuppoſe it to have been intended for the *legal paſſover*; only becauſe the fourteenth of Niſan was paſt before the ſanctification of the *Temple was finiſhed*, leſt they ſhould celebrate none at all that year, they tell us that Hezekiah, with the conſent of the rulers, did make an intercalation that year of a whole month, and ſo Niſan was reckoned for the ſecond Adar, and Jiar for Niſan; from whence they ſay that Hezekiah did intercalate Niſan in Niſan, that is, added another Niſan to the firſt. But where do we read any ſuch thing permitted in the law, as the celebrating the firſt paſſover the 14th of the ſecond month? But granting that it was obſerved as a ſecond paſſover becauſe of the want of legal ſanctification both in prieſts and people, yet we find great irregularities in the obſervation of it; for it is expreſsly ſaid, *That a multitude of the people had not cleanſed themſelves, yet they did eat the paſſover otherwiſe than it was written*: and yet it is ſaid upon Hezekiah's *prayer, that the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed every one.* So that we ſee God himſelf did diſpenſe with the ſtrict ceremonial precepts of the law, where men did look after the main and ſubſtantial parts of the worſhip God required from them. Nay, God himſelf hath expreſsly declared his own will to diſpenſe with the ritual and ceremonial law, where it comes to ſtand in competition with ſuch things as have an internal goodneſs in them, when he ſaith, *He deſired mercy and not ſacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.* Thus we plainly ſee that the ceremonial law, however poſitive it was, did yield as to its obligation, when any thing that was moral ſtood in competition with it. And ſo the Jews themſelves ſuppoſe an open violation of the judicial law to have been in the hanging up of Saul's ſons, a long time together, directly contrary to Deut. xxi. 23. which they conceive to have been from the 16th of Niſan to the 17th of Marcheſvan, which is as much as from our March to September;

2 Chron. xxix. 17.

Vid. Selden de Anno Civili Jud. cap. ix.

2 Chron. xxx. 18.

Ver. 20.

Hoſ. vi. 6.

2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.

September; whereas the law ſaith expreſsly, that the *body of one that is hanged ſhall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou ſhalt in any wiſe bury him that day.* One of the Jewiſh rabbies, as G. Vorſtius tells us, is ſo troubled at this, *that he wiſheth that place in Samuel expunged out of Scripture, that the name of God might be ſanctified.* But whether this were done על פי הביבוד, *by the command of the Oracle or no*, or whether only by a general permiſſion, we ſee it was *acceptable unto God*; for upon that the Gibeonites' *famine was removed, and God was intreated for the land.* Thus we have now proved that there is no immutable and indiſpenſable obligation which ariſeth from the things themſelves.

Vorſt. Not. in Abrav. c. 13.

IV. Secondly, It is no way inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of God to repeal ſuch a law when once eſtabliſhed. The main argument of that learned R. Abravanel, whereby he would eſtabliſh the eternity of the law of Moſes, is fetched from hence, *That this law was the reſult of the wiſdom of God, who knows the ſuitableneſs of things he appoints to the ends he appoints them for; as God hath appointed bread to be the food of man's body. Now we are not to enquire why God hath appointed bread, and no other thing, to be the food of man; no more*, ſaith he, *are we to enquire why God hath appointed this law rather than another for the food of our ſouls; but we are to reſt contented with the counſels of God, though we underſtand not the reaſons of them.* This is the ſubſtance of that argument, which he more largely deduceth. To which we anſwer, that his argument holds good for obedience to all God's poſitive precepts, of what kind or nature ſoever they be, ſo long as we know their obligation to continue; but all the queſtion is, whether every poſitive precept muſt always continue to oblige? And thus far his ſimilitude will hold good, that whatever God doth command, we are to look upon it to be as neceſſary to our ſouls, as bread to our bodies; but hence it follows not that our ſouls muſt be always held to the ſame poſitive precepts, any more than our bodies to

Abravanel Roſh. Amanana, c. 13.

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the ſame kind of food: nay, as in our bodies we find ſome kind of food always neceſſary, but the kind of it to alter according to age, health, and conſtitutions; ſo we ſay ſome kind of Divine revelation is always neceſſary; but God is graciouſly pleaſed to temper it according to the age and growth of his people: ſo he fed them, as with milk in their nonage, with a ritual and ceremonial law, and trained them up by degrees under the nurſery of the prophets, till the Church was grown to age, and then God fed it with the ſtrong meat, which is contained in God's revelation of his will by the Goſpel of his Son. And therein was abundantly ſeen God's πολυποίκιλος σοφία, his *variegated wiſdom*, that he made choice of ſuch excellent and proportionable ways to his people's capacity, to prepare them gradually for that full and complete revelation, which was reſerved for the time of the appearance of the true Meſſias in the world. For can any thing be more plain than the gradual progreſs of Divine revelation, from the beginning of the world? That fair reſemblance and portraiture of God himſelf, and his will upon his word (if I may ſo expreſs it) had its ground-work laid upon man's firſt apoſtaſy, in the promiſe made Gen. iii. 15. whereon ſome further lines were drawn in the times of the Patriarchs; but it had its σκιαγραφία; it was ſhadowed out the moſt in the typical and ceremonial law, but was never filled up to the life, nor had its perfect ζωγραφία, till the Son of God himſelf appeared unto the world. If then it be inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of God to add any thing to the law of Moſes, why not to the revelation made to Adam or the Patriarchs? or eſpecially to the ſeven precepts of Noah, which they ſuppoſe to have been given to all mankind after the flood? If it were not repugnant to the wiſdom of God to ſuperadd rituals and ceremonials to morals and naturals, why ſhall it be to take down the ſcaffolds of ceremonies, when God's ſpiritual Temple, the Church of God, is come to its full

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full height? Is there not more reaſon that rituals ſhould give place to ſubſtantials, than that ſuch ſhould be ſuperinduced to morals? CHAP. VII.

There are only two things can be pleaded by the Jews why it ſhould be more repugnant to the wiſdom of God to add to the law of Moſes than to any former revelation; which are, the greater perfection they ſuppoſe to be in this revelation above others, and that God, in the promulgation of it, did expreſs that he would never alter it. But both theſe are manifeſtly defective and inſufficient, in order to the end for which they are produced. For, firſt, what evidence is there that the law of Moſes contained ſo great perfection in it, as that it was not capable of having any additions made to it by God himſelf? We ſpeak not now of the perfection of the moral law, which it is granted contained in it the foundation of all poſitive precepts: for this we never contend for the abrogation of, but the ritual law is that we meddle with: and is it poſſible any men ſhould be ſo little befriended by reaſon, as to think this to be the utmoſt pitch of what God could reveal to the world, as to the way of his own worſhip? Let any indifferent rational perſon take the precepts of the Goſpel, and lay them in the balance with thoſe of the ceremonial law, and if he makes any ſcruple of deciding on which ſide the over-weight lies, we may have cauſe to ſuſpect him forſaken of that little reaſon which gave him the name of Man. Let but the fifth of Matthew be laid againſt the whole book of Leviticus, and then ſee whether contains the more excellent precepts, and more ſuitable to the Divine nature. I ſpeak not this to diſparage any thing which had once God for the author of it, but to let us ſee how far God was from the neceſſity of natural agents to act to the height of his ſtrength in that diſcovery of his will. God is wiſe as well as righteous in all his ways; as he can command nothing but what is juſt, ſo he will command nothing but what

V. Pſ. xix. 10.

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BOOK II. is good, nay excellent in its kind. But though all the ſtars be in the ſame firmament, *yet one ſtar differs from another in glory*; though they may be all pearls, yet ſome may be more orient than others are: every place of Holy Scripture may have its crown, but ſome may have their aureolæ; a greater excellency, a fuller and larger capacity than the other hath: every parcel of Divine revelation may have ſome perfection in its kind; yet there may be ſome *monſtra perfectionis*, in Scaliger's expreſſion, that may far outvie the glory and excellency of the reſt. Can we think the miſts and umbrages of the law could ever caſt ſo glorious a light as the Sun of Righteouſneſs himſelf, in his meridian elevation? As well may we think a dark ſhady paſſage more magnificent and glorious than the moſt princely palace; a picture drawn in charcoal more exquiſite and curious than the lines of Apelles; ſome imperfect rudiments more exact and accurate than the moſt elaborate work, as go about to compare the law of Moſes with the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt in point of excellency and perfection. Let the Jews then boaſt never ſo much of their *gradus Moſaicus*, and how much it exceeds the degree of revelation in other prophets: we know, if his light be compared with what the Goſpel communicates, Moſes himſelf ſaw but as in a glaſs darkly, and not in *ſpeculo lucido*, as the Jews are wont to ſpeak. We honour Moſes much; but we have learnt to honour him, at whoſe transfiguration he was preſent, more: neither can that be thought any diſparagement to him, who accounted *the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt*.

VI. *But it may be, though the law in itſelf be not ſo abſolutely perfect, yet God may have declared he will never alter it; and then it is not conſiſtent with Divine wiſdom to repeal it.* Very true: God will never alter what he hath ſaid he will not; but where is it that he hath thus bound up himſelf? Is it in that noted place to this purpoſe, *Thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from*

Deut. xii. 32.

from it? So indeed Maimonides argues, but therein more like a Jew than himſelf; and yet one of his own nation, therein far more ingenuous than he, gives a moſt ſufficient anſwer to it, which is R. Joſ. Albo, whoſe words are thus produced by Vorſtius and others: *The Scripture only admoniſheth us, that we ſhould not add to nor diminiſh from God's commands according to our own wills; but what hinders*, ſaith he, *but God himſelf may, according to his own wiſdom, add or diminiſh what he pleaſeth?* But are they in good earneſt when they ſay God bound up himſelf by this ſpeech? Whence came then all the prophetical revelations among the Jews? Did theſe add nothing to the law of Moſes, which was as much the will of God when revealed by them, as any thing was revealed by Moſes himſelf? Or will they ſay, that all thoſe things were contained for the ſubſtance in the law of Moſes, as to what concerned practice? Very true; but not in the ceremonial, but the moral law; and ſo we ſhall not ſtick to grant that the whole duty of man may be reduced to that. But if adding to the precepts be the doing of God's commands in another way than he hath preſcribed, and diminiſhing from them be merely not to do what God hath commanded, as ſome conceive, then theſe words are ſtill more remote from the ſenſe affixed on them by the incredulous Jews. For why may not God himſelf add to his own laws, or alter the form of them, although we are always bound directly to follow God's declared will? May not God enlarge his own will, and bring his ſcholars from the rudiments of their nonage to the higher knowledge of thoſe who are full grown? or muſt the world of neceſſity do that which the old Roman ſo much abhorred, *ſeneſcere in elementis, wax grey in learning this A, B, C?* Or was the ceremonial law like the China characters, that the world might ſpend its age in conning of them? But it appears that there was no other meaning in that ſtrict prohibition, than that men ſhould not of

Maimon. de Fund. Leg. c. 9. ſ. 1. Ikkarim l. iii. c. 14.

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BOOK II. their own heads offer to find out new ways of worſhip, as Jeroboam did; but that God's revelation of his own will, in all its different degrees, was to be the adequate rule of the way and parts of his own worſhip. And I would fain know of the Jews, whether their own ſevere and ſtrict prohibitions of things not at all forbidden in the law of God, and that on a religious account, as סיג לתורה, *a boundary to the law*, come not nearer the adding to God's law, than God's own further declaration of his will doth? All the diſpute then muſt be, not whether God may add to his own law, but whether the Goſpel be a prohibited addition to the law of Moſes; that is, whether it be only the invention of men, or it be the expreſs declaration of the will of God? As to which controverſy, he is no true Chriſtian who dare not readily join iſſue with them, and undertake to prove, by all the arguments by which they believe the law of Moſes to have been of Divine revelation, that the Goſpel of Chriſt is a clear manifeſtation of the will of God. But of that afterwards.

VII. From hence it is evident, that God hath not by this place tied up himſelf from any further manifeſtation of his mind beyond the law of Moſes; but it may be they may put a greater confidence in thoſe expreſſions which ſeem neceſſarily to imply a perpetual and unalterable obligation in the law of Moſes: For, ſaith the late learned Rabbi Manaſſe Ben Iſrael, *If by ſuch expreſſions as thoſe are uſed in Scripture which ſeem to import the perpetuity of the law of Moſes, ſomewhat elſe ſhould be meant than they ſeem to expreſs, what did Moſes and the prophets, in uſing them, but lay a ſtumbling-block in the ways of men; whereas they might have ſpoken clearly, and told us there ſhould a time come when the ceremonial law ſhould oblige no longer?* This being a charge of ſo high a nature, muſt not be diſmiſſed without a particular enquiry into the expreſſions which are the ground and reaſon of it. The places moſt inſiſted on by the Jews, are Deut. xxix. 29.

Manaſſ. Concil. in Levit. ix. 7.

Things

Things which are revealed belong to us and to our children עד עולם *for ever.* So Levit. xxiii. 14. the precept of offering the firſt-fruits is there called חקת עולם *a ſtatute for ever*; and that of the paſſover, Exod. xii. 17. where the ſame expreſſion is uſed. From hence they infer that no alteration can happen as to the ceremonial law, ſince God himſelf hath declared that it ſhall continue for ever. To this common argument of the Jews, it is in general replied, That the word, in which the main force of the argument lies, doth not carry with it an abſolute perpetuity; but it ſignifies according to the ſubject it is joined with. So when it is applied to God, it ſignifies eternity; not ſo much from the mere importance of the word, as from the neceſſary exiſtence of the Divine nature. Thence Maimonides himſelf can ſay, *Proinde ſciendum eſt quod Olam non neceſſario ſignificet æternitatem, niſi ei conjungatur Ed* (עֵד *vel* עַד) *idque vel poſt illud ut Olam vaed, vel ante Ad Olam.* Although this rule of his hath no certainty at all in it, as appears from his collection of it, which is becauſe it is ſaid, Pſ. x. 16. *The Lord he is king Olam vaed, for ever and ever:* but as I ſaid already, that is not from the ſignification of the word, but the nature of the thing. And it is moſt plain in Scripture that עולם is ſo far from implying a neceſſary perpetuity, that it is applied to ſuch things as can have no long duration, as Exod. xxi. 6. *and he ſhall ſerve him,* לעולם, that is (as the Jews themſelves expound it), *to the next jubilee, though it were near or far off.* So 1 Sam. i. 22. where Samuel is ſaid *to abide before the Lord* עד עולם *for ever*; where we find Maimonides's *Ad Olam* in a ſenſe very far ſhort of eternity. This is ſo plain, that the formerly cited R. Joſeph Albo doth in terms confeſs it, and produceth a multitude of other places to the ſame purpoſe: for which though he be ſufficiently cenſured by his brethren, yet we may ſee there may be ſome ingenuity left in a Jewiſh rabbi, even in the

Maimon. More Nev. l. ii. c. 28.

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BOOK II. grand diſpute concerning the eternity of the law of Moſes.

VIII. All the difficulty now is to aſſign ſome rational accounts why ſuch precepts, which God did not intend, ſhould be always obligatory, yet ſhould be enforced upon them in ſuch expreſſions which may ſeem at leaſt to imply a perpetuity. Of which theſe may be given. Firſt, *That theſe precepts, to which theſe expreſſions are annexed, ſhould not be looked on as mere ambulatory laws, that did only concern them in their travels through the wilderneſs, and not continue obligatory when they were ſettled in Canaan.* For which purpoſe we are to obſerve, that though all the laws were given in one body in the wilderneſs, yet the obligation to all of them did not commence at the ſame time, neither were they to continue for the ſame duration. Theſe three ſorts of precepts may be obſerved among them: firſt, ſuch as concerned them only in their preſent condition, as that about the Tabernacle, which was then a moveable Temple among them, ſuitable to their condition; but when they were ſettled, God was to have a ſettled houſe too. So that precept of going without *the camp*, Deut. xxiii. 12. had an immediate reſpect to their peregrination. Secondly, Such precepts as were given them, but they were not bound to perform them till their ſettlement in Canaan; *as driving out the Canaanites*, Numb. xxxiii. 52. *building the Temple in the place which God ſhould chooſe, erecting judicatories in their ſeveral cities, chooſing a king*, &c. Thirdly, There were ſuch precepts as concern them wherever they were, whether in the wilderneſs or in Canaan. Now theſe are the precepts which are ſaid to be perpetual. This is the account given of it by H. Grotius; but becauſe this may be liable to ſome exceptions, I therefore add, ſecondly, that the reaſon of thoſe expreſſions being annexed to the precepts of the ceremonial law, is, *becauſe they were to continue obligatory till ſuch a remarkable period of time*

Grot. de Verit. Rel. Chriſt. l. v. ſ. 7.

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time came, which ſhould alter the ſtate of things among them. And ſuch a period of time the coming of the Meſſias is by themſelves ſuppoſed to be, when in their famous computation they make three epochas; before the law, under the law, and the coming of the Meſſias. And it is evident yet by them, that they do ſtill expect a wonderful alteration of the ſtate of things when the Meſſias comes: doth it not therefore ſtand to reaſon that לעולם ſhould be added to ſuch things which were to continue till ſo great an alteration as ſhould be on the coming of the Meſſias, eſpecially if the coming of the Meſſias had been deferred ſo long as they falſely ſuppoſe it to be? But however, granting that a new ſeries of times, or αἰὼν, is to commence from the Meſſias, there is very great reaſon why that expreſſion ſhould be added to thoſe things which were to continue as long as the αἰὼν did, i. e. till Meſſias came; which we freely acknowledge. And in this ſenſe is עולם often taken for ſuch a duration of things which had ſome remarkable period to conclude it; as in the caſe of the Jubilee, in the ſervant mentioned, and the ſpecial employment which God called Samuel to: in this caſe, as to the event, or the end of his life in Hannah's deſignation, when ſhe ſaid he ſhould attend upon the Lord for ever. Thirdly, Theſe precepts are ſaid *to endure for ever, which would ſtill have continued obligatory, unleſs God himſelf had altered the obligation of them by a new revelation of his will.* For in this caſe it is moſt certain that all poſitive precepts, coming immediately from God, do carry with them an unalterable obligation, unleſs the legiſlator himſelf do in as evident a way repeal them as he did once eſtabliſh them; that is in ſuch laws which depend merely upon God's poſitive and arbitrary will: for in this caſe God allows none to alter any thing concerning his law; but indiſpenſable obedience is our duty, till God himſelf repeal his former laws. And this we aſſert to be the caſe in the Goſpel: ſo that it appears

BOOK II. appears plainly that it implies nothing inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of God to repeal an eſtabliſhed poſitive law; though ſome expreſſions, to prejudiced minds, ſeem to imply a perpetuity in it.

IX. We come therefore to the third thing which may make a poſitive law unalterable; which is, when the reaſon of it is immutable; for then, ſay they, it would argue mutability in God to repeal it. If we can therefore make it evident that the ceremonial law was not eſtabliſhed on an immutable reaſon, and that the reaſon on which it was eſtabliſhed doth ſuppoſe a ſtate of things to come, in which it ſhould expire, then there cannot be the leaſt pretence of mutability in God on the repeal of ſuch a law. Firſt, *That it was not eſtabliſhed upon an immutable reaſon.* The immutable reaſon of a law muſt either be fetched from the nature of the things commanded, or the grounds of the eſtabliſhing of it. We have already proved that the nature of the poſitive precepts of the ceremonial law do not carry in them an intrinſical goodneſs. And here the ſophiſtry of the Jews is apparently diſcovered, that when they are preſſed with this, they take ſanctuary in the Decalogue, or ſome ſpiritual precepts, which comprehend in them the general foundation of the law; as, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, &c. Whereas theſe are very remote from the matter in controverſy, which concerns not what precepts were moral in their law, but what were purely ceremonial; which were ſo far from being founded on an immutable reaſon, that the particular occaſion of the giving of many of them is particularly aſſigned them by their own writers; eſpecially in the main parts of the ceremonial worſhip of God among them, the reaſons of which Maimonides ſaith may be deduced from the cuſtoms of the Zabaiſts; the knowledge of whoſe opinions and cuſtoms, he tells us, is *Porta magna ad reddendas præceptorum cauſas, gives much light to the law of Moſes:* and particularly of himſelf he ſaith,

Maimon. More Nev. l. iii. c. 29.

Quod

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CHAP. VII.

Quod multarum legum rationes & cauſæ mihi innotuerint ex cognitione fidei, rituum & cultus Zabiorum; that he came to the right underſtanding of many of the laws of Moſes, by his knowledge in the rites and cuſtoms of theſe Zabaiſts. Granting, therefore, the hypotheſis of this learned Rabbi, that the precepts of the law had moſt of them a particular reſpect to the idolatrous cuſtoms of theſe people, what will hence follow but only this, that the reaſon of the ceremonial precepts did reſpect the cuſtoms in uſe when they were given, and ſo are not founded upon an immutable reaſon? And the more the precepts are whoſe reaſon is to be fetched from hence, the more plain and evident is the thing we intended by it, viz. *that the ceremonial law is not founded upon an unalterable reaſon.*

X.

Now from this one head of the idolatrous cuſtoms of thoſe nations about them, hath that learned author deduced the reaſons of very many of the moſt obſcure commands of the ceremonial law: as that concerning *rounding the corner of their heads*, which Herodotus tells us was the cuſtom of the Arabians, and others of the Babylonian prieſts; by both which the Zabii may be meant; the ſuperſtition of the Zabii being Chaldæan, as I have ſhewed already, and their name, as ſome conceive, from Saba, the ſon of Chus, whoſe poſterity were ſeated in Arabia, near to the Red Sea; and that which confirms this opinion, is, that the Sabeans did, as Philoſtorgius ſaith, *worſhip the ſun and moon*, as the Zabaiſts did in Maimonides; and withal Bochartus makes it evident from Strabo, that ſome of the Babylonians, called Gerrhæi, poſſeſſed themſelves of the country of the Sabeans, whereby this originally Chaldaic ſuperſtition might ſpread itſelf in theſe parts near the confines of Judea, which might be the cauſe why all thoſe rites, which were uſed by theſe idolatrous people, are ſo ſeverely forbidden to the Jews; God thereby ſetting up a wall of ſeparation between his people and the nations round

Levit. xix. 27. V. Voſſ. in Maimon. de Idololat. c. 12.

Bochart. Phaleg. l. iv. c. 8.

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BOOK II.

round about them, by making the cuſtoms of the Jews almoſt antipodes to theirs; as thoſe of Japan are to them of China. Upon the ſame ground, it is ſuppoſed, that other precept was made againſt *wearing a garment of linen and woollen*, becauſe the idolatrous prieſts *uſed to go ſo clothed*, as Maimonides tells us out of their books; and likewiſe that prohibition of a *woman's wearing the armour of a man, and a man's wearing the garments of a woman*, is very probably ſuppoſed to have had its original from that idolatrous cuſtom mentioned by the ſame author, *Ut vir geſtet veſtimentum muliebre coloratum quando ſtat coram ſtella Veneris; ſimiliter ut mulier induat loricam & arma bellica quando ſtat coram ſtella Martis*; but that author doth not deny a further reaſon to be couched in it, for the preſervation of public honeſty. Many other precepts are drawn from the ſame fountain by that ſame author; as *the ſowing of divers ſeeds in the ſame ground*; *the forbidding the eating of the fruit of their trees for the firſt three years after they came to Canaan*; that being the furtheſt time wherein the trees of their own plantation would begin to bear in that country. Now it was the cuſtom of all thoſe idolatrous people, that the firſt time any tree did bear, part of the fruit was to be burnt up in an offering to the idol, and the other part eaten in the idol-temple; or elſe they ſuppoſed their trees would never proſper. Now, in oppoſition to this, God bids them bring the fruit of the fourth year to him; and eat of the fifth themſelves, *that it may yield unto you the increaſe thereof*. So the idolaters threatened all parents that their children would never live, unleſs they *cauſed them to paſs through the fire*; from which cuſtom Maimonides ſaith, *Some even in his time would take the children that were new-born, and move them up and down over a fire wherein odoriferous ſmells were caſt*. Thence comes that ſtrict prohibition of *giving the children to Moloch*; which was by that cuſtom of paſſing through the fire. To this ſame head the ſame

Levit. xix. 19. Maimon. More Nev. l. iii. c. 37. Deut. xxii. 5.

V. Selden. de Diis Syris, Synt. ii. c. 4.

Lev. xix. 19. Lev. xix. 23.

Lev. xix. 24, 25.

Lev. xx. 2, 3. Gen. ix. 4.

ſame author refers that of *not eating the member of a living creature*, which we render *fleſh with the life thereof*; which was forbidden, as he elſewhere tells us, not only for avoiding cruelty, but becauſe the *Heathen nations were wont, in their idolatrous feaſts, to take a member off from a living creature, and eat it afterwards*: and in them likewiſe he ſuppoſeth they uſed the *boiling the fleſh and the milk together*, *which*, ſaith he, *beſides that it affords a moſt groſs nouriſhment, ſavours of their idolatrous practices too*; *and therefore*, ſaith he, *it is obſervable, that twice where this precept is mentioned, it follows that of the ſolemn appearance of the males at Jeruſalem thrice a year, whereby it ſeems to be implied that this action had relation to ſome great ſolemnity.* Theſe and ſeveral other precepts of the law of Moſes are deduced by that very learned Rabbi from idolatrous cuſtoms, as the occaſions of them; which ſeem to have the more reaſon in them, becauſe that God did in the general ſo ſtrictly *forbid the Jews to walk after the cuſtom of the nations about them.* Thence Origen takes notice of the τὸ ξενίζον τῶν νόμων, καὶ τὴν ἰδιότροπον καὶ αὐτὸς πολιτείαν; for which he ſaith, they *were* διαβεβλημένοι, *reproached by the Heathens, becauſe their laws and polity were ſo different from the cuſtom of other nations.* Thus we ſee then that many precepts of the ceremonial law were founded neither on the goodneſs of the things themſelves, nor on any unalterable reaſon, but were enforced on a peculiar reaſon on the people of the Jews at that time, as they were a people ſeparated from the reſt of the world for the worſhip of the true God. And for the other great offices wherein their religion did ſo much conſiſt, viz. ſacrifices, diſtinction of meats, obſervation of feſtivals, circumciſion, and ſuch like; the particular account and reaſon of them is either ſo evident in the law itſelf, or ſo fully acknowledged by their own writers, that it is here ſuperfluous to inſiſt on them; eſpecially ſince ſo many have done that ſo largely

Maimon. More Nev. p. iii. c. 48.

Exod. xxiii. 17, 19. xxxiv. 26.

Levit. xx. 23.

Origen contra Celſum, l. iv. p. 190. Ed. Spencer.

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BOOK II.

largely already, particularly Grotius, whoſe labours I intend not to tranſcribe.

Grot. de Veritate Rel. Chriſt. l. v. XI.

I come therefore to the ſecond thing, which is, *That the ceremonial law was ſo far from being founded on an immutable reaſon, that while it was in its greateſt force, ſuch a ſtate of things was plainly foretold, with which the obſervation of that law would be inconſiſtent.* For which we are to conſider, that though the law of Moſes ſeemed outwardly to reſpect the temporal advantages of the people embracing it in the land of Canaan, yet there was a ſpring of ſpiritual promiſes, whoſe head was higher than Jordan was, that ran down from the patriarchs, and was more fully opened to ſome of them; which though it ſeemed to run under ground in the midſt of the ceremonial obſervations of the law, yet it frequently brake forth and opened itſelf in the midſt of them, and by degrees, in the prophetical age, did make itſelf a larger channel, till in the time of the Meſſias, by its force and violence, it overthrew thoſe banks which ſtood in the way of it, and overſpread the face of the whole earth. It is evident, by the whole ſeries of the Scripture of the Old Teſtament, that God's ultimate intention was not to confine the ſaving knowledge of his will only to the Jews; for the great promiſe to Abraham was, *That in his ſeed all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed*; and as Abraham *rejoiced to ſee that day afar off*, ſo good Jacob, when he leaned on his Jacob's ſtaff, took the height of that *day-ſtar from on high*, which, though like ſome of the fixed ſtars, might not for ſome time be viſible to the inferior world, yet foretold the time when he ſhould deſcend into a lower orb, and become conſpicuous in our horizon: and conſequently to his appearance in the world, would be the drawing not ſo much the eyes as the hearts of the world to him; for no ſooner is it mentioned that *Shiloh comes when the ſceptre departs from Judah*, but it immediately follows,

Gen. xlix. 10.

And

And to him ſhall the gathering of the people be. Thus we ſee, before ever the law of Moſes came to incloſe the people of the Jews as *God's peculiar people*, there was a deſign on foot for enlarging the bounds of God's inheritance, and *making the uttermoſt parts of the earth his Son's poſſeſſion.* Can we then think that the law which came afterwards could diſannul the covenant made 430 years before, as the Apoſtle excellently reaſons? Can we believe the Moſaical diſpenſation was the utmoſt of what God did intend, when God had before promiſed that the bleſſing of Abraham ſhould come upon us Gentiles alſo? To which purpoſe it is very obſervable, that Abraham *was juſtified not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion*; *for he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, being uncircumciſed, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed*; *that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo.* Whereby it is evident that the great bleſſings promiſed to Abraham did not reſpect him merely as progenitor of the Iſraelites, but in a higher capacity, as *father of the faithful*; and that the ground of his acceptance with God did not depend on any ceremonial rite, ſuch as circumciſion was, God imputing his faith for righteouſneſs before his being circumciſed, but becauſe the time was not yet come wherein the grand myſtery of man's ſalvation, by the death of the Son of God, was to be revealed. Therefore when God called the nation of the Jews from their bondage, he made choice of a more obſcure way of repreſenting this myſtery to them through all the umbrages of the law; and withal enforced his precepts with ſuch terrible ſanctions of curſes to *all that continued not in all that was written in that law to do it*, to make them the more apprehenſive that the ground of their acceptance with God could not be the performance of the precepts of that law, but they ought to breathe after that higher diſpenſation, wherein the way and method of man's ſalvation ſhould

Gal. iv. 17.

Rom. iv. 10, 11.

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BOOK II. ſhould be fully *revealed when the fulneſs of time was come.* Now therefore God left them under the tutorage and pædagogy of the law, which ſpake ſo ſeverely to them, that they might not think this was all God intended in order to the happineſs of men, but that he did reſerve ſome greater thing in ſtore, to be enjoyed by his people when they were come to age.

XII. So that though the ceremonies of the law had not a mouth to ſpeak out Chriſt, yet they had a hand to point to him; for they were the ſhadow, or dark repreſentation of that which was to be drawn afterwards to the greateſt life. And this was underſtood by all thoſe whoſe hearts were carried beyond the outward ſapleſs letter of the law, to the more inward and ſpiritual meaning of it (there being an εἰσωτερικὰ and ἐξωτέρικα in the law as well as philoſophy). Theſe myſteries were too not ſo veiled and hidden, but all that were ἐπόπται, *fully initiated*, might fully underſtand them; which made that true ſpiritual *cabala*, which was conſtantly preſerved among the Iſraelites, which was more largely commented on by the prophets of ſucceeding ages; whoſe care it was to unlock this *cabala*, and to raiſe up the hearts of the people in a higher expectation of the great things which were to come. Thence we not only read of the ſolemn prayer of the Church of the Jews, that Pſ. lxvii. 2. the knowledge of God might be *diſperſed over all the nations of the earth*, but we have many prophecies, Iſaiah ii. 2. Mal. i. 11. *that when the mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhould be exalted, all nations ſhould flow unto it: that from the riſing of the ſun to the going down thereof, God's name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incenſe ſhould be offered to his name, and a pure offering; for his name ſhall be great among the Heathen.* That the inſcription on the High-Prieſt's forehead, *Holineſs to the Lord*, ſhould, by reaſon of the large diffuſion of a Zech. xiv. 20. Spirit of Holineſs in the days of the Goſpel, *be ſet upon the bells of horſes; that the pots in the Lord's houſe*

houſe ſhould be as the bowls before the altar, i. e. that when the Levitical ſervice ſhould be laid aſide, and that holineſs, which was that appropriated to the Prieſts and inſtruments of the Temple, ſhould be diſcerned in thoſe things which ſeemed moſt remote from it. That a *prieſthood, after another order than that of Aaron, ſhould be eſtabliſhed, viz. after the order of Melchiſedec*, and that he that was the *prieſt after this order ſhould judge among the Heathen, and wound the heads over many countries*; *that in the day of his power the people* ſhould not be frighted to obedience with thunder-claps and earthquakes (as at Mount Sinai), but ſhould come and *yield themſelves* as a *free-will offering* unto him; and yet their number be as great as the *drops of the dew which diſtil in the morning*. That *God out of other nations would take unto himſelf for Prieſts and for Levites*; *that the deſire of all nations ſhould ſpeedily come*; *that the meſſenger of the covenant ſhould come into his Temple*; nay, that *ſeventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city*; *that then the viſion and prophecy ſhould be ſealed up*; *that the ſacrifice and oblation ſhould be cauſed to ceaſe*; *that the city and the ſanctuary ſhould be deſtroyed, and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined*; *that after threeſcore and two weeks Meſſias ſhould be cut off, but not for himſelf*; *that by him tranſgreſſion ſhould be finiſhed, and reconciliation for iniquity ſhould be made, and everlaſting righteouſneſs ſhould be brought in*. And leſt all theſe things ſhould be apprehended to be only a higher advancing of the Levitical worſhip, and the way of external ceremonies, God expreſsly ſaith, *That he would make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah*; *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt*; *which my covenant they brake, although I was an huſband to them, ſaith the Lord: but this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe*

CHAP. VII.

Pſal. cx. 4, 5, 6.
Ver. 3.
Iſa. lxvi. 21.
Hag ii. 7.
Mal. iii. 1.
Dan. ix. 24, 26, 27.
Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

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days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. Can any one, that now conſiders ſeriouſly the ſtate of things thus deſcribed as it ſhould come to paſs, ever imagine that the Levitical ſervice was ever calculated for this ſtate? Was God's worſhip to be confined to his Temple at Jeruſalem, when all the nations of the earth ſhould come to ſerve him? Was the High Prieſt to make an atonement there, when an order of prieſthood, different from the Aaronical, ſhould be ſet up? Muſt the tribe of Levi only attend at the Temple, when God ſhould take the Prieſts and Levites out of all nations that ſerve him? What would become of the magnificence and glory of the Temple, when both city and ſanctuary ſhall be deſtroyed; and that muſt be within few prophetical weeks after the Meſſias is cut off? And muſt the covenant God made with the Iſraelites continue for ever, when God expreſsly ſaith he would make a new one; and that not according to the covenant which he made with them then? It is ſo evident then, as nothing can well be more, that under the Old Teſtament ſuch a ſtate of religion was deſcribed and promiſed, with which the Levitical worſhip would be inconſiſtent; and ſo that the ceremonial law was not at firſt eſtabliſhed upon an immutable reaſon, which was the thing to be proved.

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CHAP. VIII.

General Hypotheſes concerning the Truth of the Doctrine of Chriſt.

I. *The great Prejudice againſt our Saviour among Jews and Heathens, was the Meanneſs of his Appearance. The Difference of the Miracles at the Delivery of the Law and Goſpel.* II. *Some general Hypotheſes to clear the Subſerviency of Miracles to the Doctrine of Chriſt.* 1. *That where the Truth of a Doctrine depends not on Evidence, but Authority, the only Way to prove the Truth of the Doctrine, is to prove the Teſtimony of the Revealer to be infallible. Things may be true which depend not on Evidence of the Things. What that is, and on what it depends. The Uncertainty of natural Knowledge.* III. *The Exiſtence of God the Foundation of all Certainty. The Certainty of Matter of Faith proved from the ſame Principle. Our Knowledge of any Thing ſuppoſeth ſomething incomprehenſible.* IV. *The Certainty of Faith as great as that of Knowledge; the Grounds of it ſtronger. The Conſiſtency of rational Evidence with Faith: yet Objects of Faith exceed Reaſon; the Abſurdities following the contrary Opinion.* VI. *The Uncertainty of that which is called Reaſon.* VII. *Philoſophical Dictates no Standard of Reaſon. Of Tranſubſtantiation and Ubiquity,* &c. *why rejected as contrary to Reaſon. The Foundation of Faith in Matters above Reaſon.* VIII. *Which is infallible Teſtimony; that there are Ways to know which is infallible, proved. 2 Hypoth. A Divine Teſtimony the moſt infallible. The Reſolution of Faith into God's Veracity as its formal Object.* IX. *3 Hypoth. A Divine Teſtimony may be known, though God ſpeak not immediately. Of Inſpiration among the Jews, and Divination among the Heathens.* XII. *4 Hypoth. The Evidence of a*

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Divine Teſtimony muſt be clear and certain. XIII. *Of the common Motives of Faith, and the Obligation to Faith ariſing from them. The Original of Infidelity.*

HAVING now cleared that the law of Moſes was capable of a repeal, I come to the ſecond enquiry, *Whether the miracles of our Saviour did give a ſufficient evidence of his power and authority to repeal it.* I ſhall not (to prevent too large an excurſion) inſiſt on any other evidences of our Saviour's being the promiſed Meſſias, but keep cloſe to the matter of our preſent debate, concerning the evidence which ariſeth from ſuch a power of miracles as our Saviour had, in order to his eſtabliſhing that doctrine which he came to publiſh to the world. The great ſtumbling-block in reference to our bleſſed Saviour among both the Jews and learned Heathens, was the meanneſs of his appearance in the world, not coming attended with that ſtate and magnificence which they thought to be inſeparable from ſo great a perſon. The Jews had their ſenſes ſo poſſeſſed with the thunderings and lightnings on Mount Sinai, that they could not imagine the ſtructure of their ceremonial worſhip could be taken down with leſs noiſe and terror than it was erected with. And withal collecting all thoſe paſſages of the Old Teſtament, which ſeemed to foretel ſuch glorious things of the days of the Meſſias (which either refer to his ſecond coming, or muſt be underſtood in a ſpiritual ſenſe), they having their minds oppreſſed with the ſenſe of their preſent calamities, applied them wholly to an external greatneſs, whereby they might be delivered from the tyranny of the Roman power. The Heathens, as appears by Celſus and others, thought it very ſtrange that the Son of God ſhould appear in the world with ſo little grandeur, and have no greater train than twelve ſuch obſcure perſons as the Apoſtles were. For, ſaith Celſus, Ὡς γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος πάντα τὰ ἄλλα φωτίζων πρῶτον αὐτὸν δεικνύει, ἅτως ἐχρὴν πεποιηκέναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ

Apud Orig. l. ii. p. 79. Ed. Spencer.

τοῦ Θεοῦ· *as the ſun, which enlightens all other things, doth firſt diſcover himſelf, ſo it was fitting the Son of God ſhould do when he appeared to the world.* And ſo we ſay he did to all ſuch whoſe minds were not blinded through obſtinacy and wilful ignorance. For although this Sun of Righteouſneſs was pleaſed, for the better carrying on his deſign in the world, to wrap up himſelf in a cloud, yet his glory could not be confined within it, but did break through that dark veil of his human nature, and did diſcover itſelf in a moſt clear and convincing manner. His appearances indeed were not like thoſe upon Mount Sinai; becauſe his deſign was not to amuſe men with the glory of his majeſty, and to terrify them from idolatry (which was a great reaſon of thoſe dreadful phænomena at the delivery of the law), but he came to draw all men to him by the power and energy of his grace, and therefore afforded them all rational convictions in order to it; and therefore the quality of our Saviour's miracles was conſiderable, as well as the greatneſs of them. The intent of them all was to do good, and thereby to bring the world off from its ſin and folly, to the embracing of that holy doctrine which he came to publiſh to the world. CHAP. VIII.

II. Now that ſuch a power of miracles in our Saviour had the greateſt ſubſerviency to the giving full and convincing evidence that he was the perſon he declared himſelf to be, and that his doctrine was thereby ſo clearly atteſted, that it was nothing but obſtinacy which could withhold aſſent, will appear by theſe following hypotheſes, which I lay down in order to the proving it.

1 Hypoth. *Where the truth of a doctrine depends not on the evidence of the things themſelves, but on the authority of him that reveals it, there the only way to prove the doctrine to be true, is to prove the teſtimony of him that revealed it to be infallible.* Several things are neceſſary to be proved for the clearing this propoſition.

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1. *That it is not repugnant to reaſon that a doctrine ſhould be true which depends not upon the evidence of the thing itſelf.* By evidence of the thing I underſtand ſo clear and diſtinct a perception of it, that every one who hath the uſe of his rational faculties, cannot but upon the firſt apprehenſions of the terms yield a certain aſſent to it; as, that the whole is greater than a part; that if we take away equal things from equal, the remainder muſt be equal. Now we are to obſerve, that as to all theſe common notices of human nature which carry ſuch evidence with them, the certainty of them lies in the propoſition, as it is an act of the mind abſtracted from the things themſelves; for theſe do not ſuppoſe the exiſtence of the things; but whether there be any ſuch things in the world or no as whole or parts, the underſtanding is aſſured that the idea of the whole carries more in its repreſentation than that of a part does. This is the great reaſon of the certainty and evidence of mathematical truths; not, as ſome imagine, becauſe men have no intereſt or deſign in thoſe things, and therefore they never queſtion them, but becauſe they proceed not upon ſenſible but abſtracted matter; which is not liable to ſo many doubts as the other is: for that a triangle hath three angles, no man queſtions; but whether ſuch ſenſible parts of matter make a triangle, may be very queſtionable. Now that the truth of beings, or the certainty of exiſtence of things, cannot be ſo certain as mathematical demonſtrations, appears from hence; becauſe the manner of conveyance of theſe things to my mind cannot be ſo clear and certain as in purely intellectual operations, abſtracted from exiſtent matter. For the higheſt evidences of the exiſtence of things muſt be either the judgment of ſenſe, or clear and diſtinct perception of the mind: now proceeding in a mere natural way, there can be no infallible certainty in either of theſe; for the perception of the mind, in reference to the exiſtence of things, being cauſed ſo much through

through thoſe ideas or phantaſms which are conveyed to the underſtanding through the impreſſions of ſenſe, if theſe may be demonſtrated to be fallacious, I may well queſtion the certainty of that which I am certain I have been deceived by. Suppoſing then I ſhould queſtion the truth of every thing which is conveyed in an uncertain way to my mind, I may ſoon outgo even Pyrrho himſelf in real ſcepticiſm. Neither can I conceive how clear and diſtinct perception of any thing, though not coming through the ſenſes, doth neceſſarily infer the exiſtence of the thing; for it only implies a non-repugnancy of it to our natural faculties, and conſequently the bare poſſibility of it: for otherwiſe it were impoſſible for us to have a clear perception of any thing any longer than it exiſts, nay, than we know it to exiſt; for exiſtence or non-exiſtence is all one to the underſtanding, while it is not aſſured of either. And it is withal evident, that things imaginary may clearly affect the mind as well as real; for I may have as real and diſtinct perception of a phœnix in my mind, as of a partridge; doth it therefore follow that the one is really exiſtent as well as the other? And it will be a very hard matter to aſſign a certain difference between imagination and pure intellection in ſuch things, which though not actually exiſtent, yet imply no repugnancy at all to the faculties of men's minds. It is evident, then, that there cannot be ſo great certainty of the exiſtence of things, as there may be of mathematical demonſtrations. CHAP. VIII.

III. And if that principle be ſuppoſed as the foundation of all phyſical certainty as to the being of things, viz. that there is a God, who, being infinitely good, will not ſuffer the minds of men to be deceived in thoſe things which they have a clear and diſtinct perception of (without which ſuppoſition we cannot be aſſured of the certainty of any operations of the mind, becauſe we cannot know but we were ſo made, that we might be then moſt deceived when we thought

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1. *That the foundation of all certainty lies in the neceſſary exiſtence of a Being abſolutely perfect.* So that unleſs I know that there is a God, I cannot be aſſured that I know any thing in a certain manner; and if I know there is a God, I muſt neceſſarily apprehend him to be abſolutely perfect; becauſe the grounds of my knowledge that there is a God, are from thoſe abſolute perfections which there are in him; and if I could ſuppoſe him not abſolutely perfect, I muſt ſuppoſe him not to be God; for that is neceſſarily implied in his definition. Now then if all certainty doth ſuppoſe the exiſtence of a Being ſo abſolutely perfect, I muſt, before I can know any thing certainly, conclude that there is an infinity of knowledge, wiſdom, power, and goodneſs in this God; for thoſe are things which all who underſtand them will grant to be perfections; and if they be in God, they muſt be abſolute, i. e. infinite. And if they be infinite, it neceſſarily follows that they muſt tranſcend our apprehenſions; ſo that now we have gained this principle in order to faith, that we muſt grant ſomething to be unconceivable before we can come certainly to know any thing. From whence it follows, that thoſe who will not believe any thing to be true becauſe it is above their apprehenſions, muſt deny the foundation of all certainty, which (as we have proved) doth ſuppoſe ſomething to be infinite, or above our capacity to comprehend.

IV. 2. *That we have as great certainty of whatever is revealed to us from God, as we can have of the truth of any thing which we moſt clearly underſtand.* For the truth of knowledge depending on this ſuppoſition, that there is a God, whoſe goodneſs will not ſuffer us to be deceived in the things we clearly underſtand;

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ſtand; there is the ſame foundation for the act of faith as for that of knowledge, viz. that God will not ſuffer us to be deceived in matters which himſelf hath revealed to us. Nay, there ſeems to be greater on theſe accounts. Firſt, That there is not ſo great danger to be deceived in reference to objects of ſenſe, as there is in reference to objects of Divine revelation: becauſe objects of ſenſe make a continual impreſſion upon the organs of ſenſe; and as to theſe things we ſee, the whole world agrees in them ſo far as they are neceſſary to life; and withal, they bear a greater correſpondency to the preſent ſtate of imperfection which the ſoul is now in. But now matters of Divine revelation are of a more ſublime and ſpiritual nature, which men's minds on that account are more apt to doubt of than of things obvious to ſenſe; and withal, they call the mind ſo much off from ſenſe, that on theſe accounts the proneneſs to doubt is greater; and therefore the foundation of certainty from God's not ſuffering us to be deceived muſt be ſtronger. Secondly, There is not ſo great danger in being deceived as to matters of ſenſe or knowledge, as there is in things of Divine revelation. For we ſee, granting ſenſe to be deceived; and that we have no certainty at all in natural things, yet affairs of life are managed ſtill. Men's outward welfare depends not on the judgment of ſenſe. The merchant hath never the leſs gold in his ſhip, becauſe his ſenſe deceives him in judging that the earth moves from him, when the ſhip moves from it. The ſun doth never the leſs enlighten the world, though our ſenſes be all of Epicurus's mind, that the ſun is no bigger than he ſeems to be: but now as to matters of Divine revelation, they are things of the moſt unſpeakable weight and importance, which depend upon our believing or diſbelieving them: and therefore if the goodneſs of God be ſuch, as it will not ſuffer us to be deceived in our judgment of material and ſenſible beings, how much leſs in reference to the foundation of our certainty

BOOK II. tainty as to things divinely revealed? We ſee then what rational evidence there is not only conſiſtent with, but neceſſarily implied in, the foundation of faith; even as great as in any thing which we do moſt perfectly know; ſo that the in-evidence, which is ſo much ſpoken of as an ingredient of the nature of faith, muſt not be underſtood of the foundation whereon the act of faith doth ſtand, but of the condition of the object, which being a matter of Divine revelation, is a thing not obvious to our ſenſes. In which ſenſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks, that faith is ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, *the firm expectation of things hoped for, and ſtrong conviction of things which are not ſeen:* in which words, as Eraſmus obſerves, is contained only an high encomium of faith, and no dialectical definition of it, viz. that faith ſoars above things of ſenſe or preſent enjoyment; yea, though the objects of it be never ſo remote from either: yet where there is ſufficient evidence of Divine revelation, faith boggles at no difficulties, but is firmly reſolved that that God, who hath revealed theſe things, can and will bring them to paſs in his own time. There is not then any ſuch contrariety between the foundation of faith and knowledge as the ſchoolmen have perſuaded the world. We ſee both of them proceed on the ſame foundation of certainty. All the difference is, faith fixeth on the veracity of God immediately in reference to a Divine teſtimony; knowledge proceeds upon it, ſuppoſing no Divine revelation as to the things it doth diſcover.

Heb. xi. 1.

V. 3. We hence infer, that if the certainty of our knowledge depends on this principle, that God will not ſuffer us to be deceived, then we are bound to believe whatever God doth reveal to us, though we may not be able to comprehend the nature of the things revealed. For as to theſe things, we have the ſame ground of certainty which we have as to any natural cauſes: for as to them, we now ſuppoſe from

from the former principles, that, ſetting aſide the exiſtence of God, we could have no certainty of them, but that the formal reaſon of our certainty is reſolved into this, that God's goodneſs will not ſuffer the underſtanding to be deceived as to theſe things: the ſame I ſay as to ſpiritual myſteries revealed by God; the ground of our certainty lies not in the evidence of the things, but in the undoubted veracity of God, who hath revealed them. All that I can imagine poſſible to be replied to this, is, that God's veracity aſſures us in natural cauſes that we are not deceived, only where we have a clear and diſtinct perception of the things; but now in matters above our reaſon to comprehend, there can be no clear and diſtinct perception. To this I anſwer,

Firſt, It is evident, in the foundation of all certainty of knowledge, that there may be a clear and diſtinct perception of that which we cannot comprehend, viz. of a Being abſolutely perfect; for if we have not a clear and diſtinct perception of God, the foundation of all certainty is deſtroyed, which is the neceſſary exiſtence of ſuch a Being; and he that ſhall ſay he cannot have a clear perception of God without comprehending him, doth contradict himſelf; for if he be a Being infinite, he muſt be incomprehenſible; therefore there may be clear perception where the object itſelf is above our capacity. Now whatever foundation there is in nature for ſuch a perception without comprehenſion, that and much more is there in ſuch things as are revealed by God, though above our apprehenſion: for the idea of God upon the ſoul of man cannot be ſo ſtrong an evidence of the exiſtence of a Being above our apprehenſion, as the revelation of matters of faith is, that we ſhould believe the things ſo revealed, though our underſtandings loſe themſelves in ſtriving to reach the natures of them, and the manner of their exiſtence.

Secondly, That which is the only foundation of a ſcruple in this caſe, is a principle moſt unreaſonable in

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in itſelf, that we are to embrace nothing for truth, though divinely revealed, but what our reaſon is able to comprehend as to the nature of the thing, and the manner of its exiſtence; on which account the doctrine of the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Satisfaction*, and conſequently the whole myſtery of the Goſpel of Chriſt, muſt be rejected as incredible, and that on this bare pretence, becauſe although many expreſſions in Scripture ſeem to import all theſe things, yet we are bound to interpret them to another ſenſe, becauſe this is incongruous to our reaſon. But although Chriſtianity be a religion which comes in the higheſt way of credibility to the minds of men, although we are not bound to believe any thing but what we have ſufficient reaſon to make it appear that it is revealed by God, yet that any thing ſhould be queſtioned whether it be of Divine revelation, merely becauſe our reaſon is to ſeek as to the full and adequate conception of it, is a moſt abſurd and unreaſonable pretence; and the aſſertors of it muſt run themſelves on theſe unavoidable abſurdities.

Firſt, Of believing nothing, either in nature or religion, to be true, but what they can give a full and ſatisfactory account of as to every mode and circumſtance of it: therefore let ſuch perſons firſt try themſelves in all the appearances of nature, and then we may ſuppoſe they will not believe that the ſun ſhines till they have, by demonſtrative arguments, proved the undoubted truth of the Ptolemaic or Copernican hypotheſis; that they will never give credit to the flux and reflux of the ſea, till they clearly reſolve the doubts which attend the ſeveral opinions of it; that there is no ſuch thing as matter in the world, till they can ſatisfactorily tell us how the parts of it are united; nor that there are any material beings, till they have reſolved all the perplexing difficulties about the ſeveral affections of them; and that themſelves have not ſo much as a rational ſoul, till they are bound to ſatisfy us of the manner of the union of the

the soul and body together. And if they can expedite all these, and many more difficulties about the most obvious things (about which it is another thing to frame handsome and consistent hypotheses, than to give a certain account of them), then let them be let loose to the matters of Divine revelation; as to which yet (if they could perform the other) there were no reason for such an undertaking; for that were, CHAP. VIII.

Secondly, to commensurate the perfections of God with the narrow capacity of the human intellect; which is contrary to the natural idea of God, and to the manner whereby we take up our conceptions of God: for the idea of God doth suppose incomprehensibility to belong to his nature; and the manner whereby we form our conceptions of God, is by taking away all the imperfections we find in ourselves from the conception we form of a Being absolutely perfect, and by adding infinity to all the perfections we find in our own natures. Now this method of proceeding doth necessarily imply a vast distance and disproportion between a finite and infinite understanding; and if the understanding of God be infinite, why may not he discover such things to us, which our shallow apprehensions cannot reach unto? What ground or evidence of reason can we have that an infinite wisdom and understanding, when it undertakes to discover matters of the highest nature and concernment to the world, should be able to deliver nothing but what comes within the compass of our imperfect and narrow intellects? and that it should not be sufficient that the matters revealed do none of them contradict the prime results or common notions of mankind (which none of them do), but that every particular mode and circumstance, as to the manner of existence in God, or the extent of his omnipotent power, must pass the scrutiny of our faculties, before it obtains a *placet* for a Divine revelation?

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, it must follow from this principle, that the pretenders to it must affirm the rules or maxims which they go by in the judgment of things, are the infallible standard of reason; else they are as far to seek in the judgment of things as any others are. They must then, to be consistent with their principle, affirm themselves to be the absolute masters of reason. Now reason consisting of observations made concerning the natures of all beings, for so it must be considered, as it is a rule of judging (viz. as a system of infallible rules collected from the natures of things), they who pretend to it must demonstrate these general maxims according to which they judge, to be collected from an universal undoubted history of nature, which lies yet too dark and obscure for any to pretend to the full knowledge of, and would be only a demonstration of the highest arrogance, after so many successless endeavours of the most searching wits, in any society of persons to usurp it to themselves, especially if such persons are so far from searching into the depths of nature, that they suffer themselves very fairly to be led by the nose by the most dogmatical of all philosophers; and that in such principles which the more inquisitive world hath now found to be very short, uncertain, and fallacious. And upon severe enquiry we shall find the grand principles which have been taken by these adorers of reason, for almost the standard of it, have been some theories which have been taken up merely from observation of the course of nature, by such persons who scarce owned any hand of Providence in the world. Now it cannot otherwise be conceived but that these theories or principles, formed from such a narrow inspection into the natures of things, must make strange work, when we come to apply those things to them which were never looked at in the forming of them. Whence came those two received principles, that nothing can be produced out of nothing; that there is no possible

ſible return from a privation to a habit, but from thoſe philoſophers who believed there was nothing but matter in the world; or if they did aſſert the exiſtence of a God, yet ſuppoſed him unconcerned in the government of the world? Whence come our maſters of reaſon to tell us, that the ſoul cannot ſubſiſt after death without the body? From what philoſophy was this derived? Certainly from that which was very loth to acknowledge the immortality of the ſoul of man: and any one who ſtrictly obſerves the cloſe coherence of the principles of the Peripatetic philoſophy, will find very little room left for an eternal Being to interpoſe itſelf in the world; and therefore ſome have ſhrewdly obſerved, that Ariſtotle ſpeaks more favourably of the being of God in his *Exoterics* than in his *Acroamatics*; which all that know the reaſon of the names will gueſs at the reaſon of. I demand, then, muſt the received principles of philoſophy, and thoſe ſhort imperfect theories, which were formed more from tradition than experience by the ancient Greeks, be taken for the ſtandard of reaſon, or no? If they muſt, we may ſoon forſake not only the ſublimer myſteries of the Trinity, Divinity of Chriſt, Reſurrection, &c. but we ſhall ſoon ſhake hands with Creation, Providence, if not Immortality of Souls, and the being of God himſelf. If theſe things be diſowned as the ſtandard of reaſon, let us know what will be ſubſtituted in the room of them; and what laws our faith muſt be tried by. Are they only mathematical demonſtrations, or the undoubted common notions of human nature, which whoſoever underſtands aſſents to them? Let any of the forementioned myſteries be made appear to contradict theſe, and we will readily yield up ourſelves captives to reaſon; but in the mean time let no jejune unproved hypotheſes in philoſophy be ſet as judges over matters of faith, whoſe only warrant for that office muſt be *Stat pro ratione voluntas*. Let the principles we proceed by be firſt manifeſted

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VII. Fourthly, According to this principle, what certainty can we have at all of any thing we are to believe? Who hath fixed the bounds of that which men call reaſon? How ſhall we know that thus far it will come, and no further? If no banks be raiſed againſt it to keep it in its due channel, we may have cauſe to fear it may in time overthrow not only the Trinity, Incarnation, Reſurrection of the dead, but all other articles of the Creed too. What preſcription can be pleaded by one ſort of men for reaſon more than for another? One will not believe this article of his faith, becauſe againſt his reaſon; and why not another reject another article on the ſame pretence? For whatever the ground of unbelief be, if it be but baptized by the name of Reaſon, it muſt, by this principle, paſs uncontrolled. If a ſullen philoſopher ſhall tell us, that the notion of an immaterial ſubſtance contradicts his reaſon as much as the Trinity doth theirs, and that the univerſe is nothing elſe but a ſyſtem of bodies, by what artifice will our maſter of reaſon purge away all that black choler, that ſo clouds his mind that he cannot ſee the notion of a ſpirit through it? And ſuch a one will make a hard ſhift but he will reconcile his opinion with Scripture too; and therefore why ſhould he be bound up to men's explications of Scripture, when there

there is no neceſſity, that he can ſee, of underſtanding it in any other way than his own? If another ſhould come and tell us, that we muſt be all Anthropomorphites, and that otherwiſe the Scripture were not intelligible, ſhall not this man put in for reaſon too? Nay, laſtly, if another ſhall come and ſpeak out, and tell us religion is but a device of ſubtle men; that all things come to paſs through chance; that the world was made by a fortuitous concourſe of atoms; and that all are fools which are not Atheiſts; and that it is impoſſible to apprehend the being of a God, and therefore by the ſame reaſon that they reject ſome myſteries of religion, he rejects the foundation of all; becauſe an infinite being is incomprehenſible: whither now hath our reaſon carried us? while we pretend to reject any thing as divinely revealed, merely on that account, that it is above our reaſon. But it may be replied, *On what account then do we reject the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, and the ubiquity of the body of Chriſt, as repugnant to reaſon, if we do not make reaſon judge in matters of faith?* I anſwer, 1. We reject theſe opinions not only as repugnant to reaſon, but as inſufficiently proved from Scripture; whereas we here ſuppoſe (it not being our preſent buſineſs to prove it) that the ſeveral doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, Reſurrection of Bodies, &c. are only rejected on that account; that though Scripture ſeems to ſpeak fair for them, yet it is otherwiſe to be interpreted, becauſe ſuppoſed to be repugnant to reaſon. 2. Thoſe doctrines before mentioned are eminently ſerviceable to promote the great end of the Goſpel, and are inlaid in the very foundation of it; as that of the Trinity and Divinity of Chriſt: but theſe we now mention are no ways conducible to that end, but ſeem to thwart and overthrow it; and tranſubſtantiation eſtabliſheth a way of worſhip contrary to the Goſpel. 3. All the foundation of tranſubſtantiation is laid upon ambiguous places of Scripture, which muſt of

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BOOK II. neceſſity have ſome tropes and figures in them; but the doctrine of the Trinity is not only contained in plain Scripture, but is evidenced by viſible appearance; as particularly at the baptiſm of our Saviour. 4. There is far greater ground why we ſhould reject tranſubſtantiation and ubiquity, as inconſiſtent with reaſon, than that they ſhould the Trinity; on this account, becauſe the grounds of reaſon on which we reject thoſe opinions, are fetched from thoſe eſſential and inſeparable properties of bodies which are inconſiſtent with thoſe opinions. Now theſe are things within the reach of our underſtandings (in which caſe God himſelf ſometimes appeals to reaſon); but it is quite another caſe when we ſearch into the incomprehenſible nature of God, and pronounce with confidence that ſuch things cannot be in God, becauſe we cannot comprehend them; which gives a ſufficient anſwer to this objection. The ſubſtance then of this diſcourſe is, that whatever doctrine is ſufficiently manifeſted to be of Divine revelation, is to be embraced and believed as undoubtedly true; though our reaſon cannot reach to the full apprehenſion of all the modes and circumſtances of it. So that as to theſe ſublime myſteries, our faith ſtands upon this twofold bottom: Firſt, that the being, underſtanding, and power of God, doth infinitely tranſcend ours, and therefore he may reveal to us matters above our reach and capacity. Secondly, that whatever God doth reveal is undoubtedly true, though we may not fully underſtand it; for this is a moſt undoubted principle, that God cannot and will not deceive any in thoſe things which he reveals to men. Thus our firſt ſuppoſition is cleared, that it is not repugnant to reaſon, that a doctrine may be true which depends not on the evidence of the thing itſelf.

The ſecond is, *That in matters whoſe truth depends not on the evidence of the things themſelves, infallible teſtimony is the fulleſt demonſtration of them:* for theſe things

things not being of mathematical evidence, there must be some other way found out for demonstrating the truth of them. And in all those things whose truth depends on testimony, the more creditable the testimony is, the higher evidence is given to them; but that testimony which may deceive, cannot give so pregnant an evidence as that which cannot; for then all imaginable objections are taken off. This is so clear, that it needs no further proof; and therefore the third follows. CHAP. VII

That there are certain ways whereby to know that a testimony delivered is infallible; and that is fully proved by these two arguments. 1. That it is the duty of all those to whom it is propounded, to believe it; now how could that be a duty in them to believe, which they had no ways to know whether it were a testimony to be believed or no? 2. Because God will condemn the world for unbelief: in which the justice of God's proceedings doth necessarily suppose that there were sufficient arguments to induce them to believe; which could not be, unless there were some certain way supposed whereby a testimony may be known to be infallible. These three things now being supposed, viz. that a doctrine may be true which depends not on evidence of reason; that the greatest demonstration of the truth of such a doctrine, is its being delivered by infallible testimony; and that there are certain ways whereby a testimony may be known to be infallible; our first principle is fully confirmed, which was, *that where the truth of a doctrine depends not on evidence of reason, but on the authority of him that reveals it, the only way to prove the doctrine to be true, is to prove the testimony of him that reveals it to be infallible.*

VIII. 2 Hypoth. The next principle or hypothesis which I lay down, is, *That there can be no greater evidence that a testimony is infallible, than that it is the testimony of God himself.* The truth of this depends upon a common notion of human nature, which is the veracity of God, in

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whatever way he diſcovers himſelf to men; and therefore the ultimate reſolution of our faith, as to its formal object, muſt be alone into the veracity of God revealing things unto us; for the *principium certitudinis*, or foundation of all certain aſſent, can be fetched no higher, neither will it ſtand any lower than the infallible verity of God himſelf; and the *principium patefactionis*, or the ground of diſcovery of ſpiritual truth to our minds, muſt be reſolved into Divine teſtimony or revelation. Theſe two then not taken aſunder, but jointly, *God, who cannot lie, hath revealed theſe things*, is the only certain foundation for a Divine faith to reſt itſelf upon. But now the particular exerciſe of a Divine faith lies in a firm aſſent to ſuch a particular thing as divinely revealed; and herein lies not ſo much the teſtimony, as the peculiar energy of the Spirit of God, in inclining the ſoul to believe peculiar objects of faith as of Divine revelation. But the general ground of faith, which they call the formal object, or the *ratio propter quam credimus*, is the general infallibility of a Divine teſtimony. For in a matter concerning Divine revelation, there are two great queſtions to be reſolved. The firſt is, Why I believe a Divine teſtimony with a firm aſſent? The anſwer to that is, Becauſe I am aſſured that whatever God ſpeaks is true: the other is, Upon what grounds do I believe this to be a Divine teſtimony? the reſolution of which, as far as I can underſtand, muſt be fetched from thoſe rational evidences, whereby a Divine teſtimony muſt be diſtinguiſhed from one merely human and fallible. For the Spirit of God, in its workings upon the mind, doth not carry it on by a brutiſh impulſe, but draws it by a ſpiritual diſcovery of ſuch ſtrong and perſuaſive grounds to aſſent to what is revealed, that the mind doth readily give a firm aſſent to that which it ſees ſuch convincing reaſon to believe. Now the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe, is the manifeſtation of a Divine teſtimony; which the

the Spirit of God ſo clearly diſcovers to a true believer, that he not only firmly aſſents to the general foundation of faith, the veracity of God, but to the particular object propounded, as a matter of Divine revelation. But this latter queſtion is not here the matter of our diſcourſe; our propoſition only concerns the general foundation of faith, which appears to be ſo rational and evident, as no principle in nature can be more. For if the teſtimony on which I am to rely be only God's, and I be aſſured from natural reaſon that his teſtimony can be no other than infallible, wherein doth the certainty of the foundation of faith fall ſhort of that in any mathematical demonſtration? Upon which account a Divine teſtimony hath been regarded with ſo much veneration among all who have owned a Deity, although they have been unacquainted with any certain way of Divine revelation. And the reaſon why any rejected ſuch a teſtimony among the Heathens, was either becauſe they believed not a Deity, or elſe that the particular teſtimonies produced were mere frauds and impoſtures; and therefore no Divine teſtimony, as it was given out to be. But the principle ſtill remained indiſputable, that on ſuppoſition the teſtimony were what it pretended to be, there was the greateſt reaſon to believe it, although it came not in ſuch a way of probation as their ſciences proceeded in. From which principle aroſe that ſpeech of Tully, which he hath tranſlated out of Plato's Timæus; *Ac difficile factu à Diis ortis fidem non habere, quanquam nec argumentis nec rationibus certis eorum ratio confirmatur.* By which we ſee what a preſumption there was of truth, where there was any evidence of a Divine teſtimony. And no doubt upon the advantage of this principle it was the Devil gained ſo great credit to his oracles; for therein he did the moſt imitate Divine revelation. From hence then we ſee what a firm bottom faith in the general ſtands upon; which is nothing ſhort of an infallible Divine teſti-

Fragm. Cicer. de Univerſo, c. 11.

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mony: other things may conduce by way of subserviency for the discovery of this; but nothing else can be a sure foundation for a Divine faith, but what is a testimony of God himself.

IX. 3 Hypoth.

A testimony may be known to be divine and infallible, though God himself do not speak in an immediate way. By being known, I do not mean the firm persuasion of a mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, but that there are sufficient evidences, *ex parte rei*, to convince men of it, which are not wilfully blind and obstinate, i. e. that the ground of unbelief in any cannot be imputed to the defect of sufficient motives to faith, but to their own perverseness and prejudice in not discerning them. Now that God may reveal and declare his mind to the world, not in an immediate way, but by some instruments he may make use of to that end, is not only evident from the great suitableness of such a way to the conditions of the persons he speaks to, but from the general persuasion of the world concerning the possibility of inspiration. The Jews are so far from denying this, that it is the very foundation of their religion as well as ours; God discovering the most of his will to them by the prophets, or by persons divinely inspired: and this general consent of all other nations, that there is such a principle as divination in the world, doth make it evident that it carries no repugnancy at all to natural light, supposing that there is a God, that he should reveal his mind by some particular persons unto the world. For which purpose the testimony of Tully, in the entrance of his books *de Divinatione*, is very considerable. *Vetus opinio est jam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque & populi Romani & omnium gentium firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Græci* μαντικὴν *appellant*, i. e. *præsensionem & scientiam rerum futurarum*; and soon after adds, *gentem quidem nullam video, neque tam humanam atque doctam, neque tam immanem atque barbaram, quæ non significari futura, & à quibusdam intelligi, prædicique*

Cicero de Divin. l. i. c. 1.

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prædicique poſſe cenſeat. He makes it appear to be an univerſal ſentiment of all nations in the world; and inſtanceth particularly in the Aſſyrians, Egyptians, Cilicians, Piſidians, Pamphylians, Grecians, Romans, Etrurians, and others. It is true, indeed, he after mentions ſome philoſophers who denied it; but they were moſt part the followers of Epicurus, who denied any Providence, and therefore might well take away divination: but if Xenophanes Colophonius had any followers who aſſerted the one and denied the other (as Tully ſeems to intimate that he was alone in that perſuaſion), yet we may probably ſuppoſe the reaſon of their rejecting it might be the impoſtures which went under the name of Divination among them; which are excellently diſcovered by that prince of Roman philoſophers as well as orators, in his ſecond book of Divination: but it is apparent, by the ſame author, that the generality of philoſophers conſented with the people in this perſuaſion, as the followers of thoſe three great ſects of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Ariſtotle, were all approvers of it; but of all perſons the Stoics were the moſt zealous contenders for it, eſpecially Chryſippus, Diogenes Babylonius, Antipater, and Poſſidonius. Some indeed rejected ſome ways of divination, yet embraced others; as Dicæarchus and Cratippus, who rejected all but dreams and ecſtaſies. But in the general we find theſe two principles went together among them, the exiſtence of a Deity, and the certainty of divination; ſo that from divination they proved a Deity, and from a Deity divination. *Si ſunt genera divinandi vera, eſſe Deos, viciſſimque ſi Dii ſint, eſſe qui divinent*, as Quintus Cicero there ſpeaks; and at laſt thus triumphs in the multitude of his witneſſes, *An dum beſtiæ loquantur exſpectamus, hominum conſentiente auctoritate contenti non ſimus?* It may not be amiſs to produce the chief argument on which the Stoics inſiſted to prove the neceſſity of divination, ſuppoſing the exiſtence of a Deity. *If there be*

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Gods, ſay they, *and they do not reveal to men things to come, it either is becauſe they do not love them, or becauſe they do not know themſelves what ſhall come to paſs, or they think it is of no concernment to men to know future things, or that it doth not become their majeſty to reveal them, or that they cannot reveal them to men if they would: but neither is it true that they do not love men; for the Gods are of a bountiful nature, and friends to mankind; neither can they be ignorant of future things, becauſe they are appointed and decreed by them; neither is it of no concernment to men to know future things; for that makes them more cautious if they know them; neither is it repugnant to their majeſty to reveal them, for nothing is more noble than bounty and doing good; and they muſt needs know theſe things, therefore they make them known to others; and if they do make them known, there muſt be ſome way whereby to know that they do ſo, or elſe they ſignify them to no purpoſe.* If now, inſtead of the knowledge of future contingencies, and the multitude of their Gods, they had inſiſted on the diſcovery and revelation by the true God, of thoſe ways which may lead men to eternal happineſs, that argument had been ſtrong and convincing, which, as it ſtands, is ſophiſtical and fallacious. So that it is very plain that not only a poſſibility of divination was acknowledged by thoſe who wanted Divine revelation, but that this divination did not ariſe from mere natural cauſes, but from an *afflatus divinus*, and a *concitatio quædam animi*, as they there ſpeak; which imports nothing ſhort of Divine inſpiration. Nay, the opinion of this was ſo common among them, that they thought any extraordinary perſons had ſomething of Divine enthuſiaſm in them, as Tully elſewhere tells us, *Nemo vir magnus ſine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.* Although then theſe Heathens were greatly miſtaken as to thoſe things they took for a Divine afflatus and divination, yet we cannot conceive ſo general a ſenſe ſhould be imprinted on the minds of men of ſuch a thing as that was, were it not a thing highly conſonant

Cicero l. ii. de Nat. Deorum.

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nant to principles of reaſon that God ſhould communicate his mind to the world by the inſpiration of ſome perſons. And therefore I conceive that Cicero and his brother Quintus, who manage that excellent diſpute of divination between them, have divided the truth between them too: for on the one ſide Quintus evidently proves the poſſibility of the thing, the conſequence of it upon the acknowledgment of a Deity, and the general conſent of mankind in the owning of it; and on the other ſide Tully himſelf excellently lays open the vanity, folly, and uncertainty, not only of the common ways of divination, but of the oracles which were in ſuch great eſteem among the Heathens. And although Tully doth ſo ſharply and ſarcaſtically anſwer the argument from the common conſent of men, *quaſi vero quidquam ſit tam valde, quam nihil ſapere, vulgare*; *as though nothing men did more generally agree in than in being fools*; yet as it is evident that the ground of that ſcoff was from the ſeveral manners of divination then in uſe, ſo it cannot be thought to be a general impeachment of human nature in a thing ſo conſequent upon the being of a God, which, as himſelf elſewhere proves, is as clear from reaſon as from that *teſtimonium gentium in hac una re non diſſidentium*, as the Chriſtian Cicero, Lactantius, ſpeaks, *The conſent of nations, which ſcarce agree in any thing elſe but that there is a God* That which we now infer from hence is, that God may make known his mind in a way infallible, though not immediate; for in caſe of inſpiration of mere men, it is not they ſo much which ſpeak, as God by them; and in caſe that God himſelf ſhould ſpeak through the veil of human nature, the teſtimony muſt needs be infallible, though the appearance of the Divinity be not viſible.

CHAP. VIII.

Lactant. de Falſ. Relig. cap. 2. Ed. Oxon.

Thoſe evidences whereby a Divine teſtimony may be known, muſt be ſuch as may not leave men's minds in ſuſpenſe, but are of their own nature convincing proofs of it. For although, as to the event, ſome may doubt, and others

X. 4 Hypoth.

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BOOK II. others diſbelieve the teſtimony ſo proved, yet it is ſufficient for our purpoſe, that in the nature of the things (ſuppoſing them to be ſuch as we ſpeak of) they are ſufficient for the eviction that the teſtimony atteſted by them is divine and infallible. I know it is a great diſpute among many, whether thoſe things, which are uſually called the common motives of faith, do of their own nature only induce a probable perſuaſion of the truth of the doctrine as probable which they are joined with, or elſe are they ſufficient for the producing a firm aſſent to the doctrine as true? I grant they are not demonſtrative ſo as to enforce aſſent, for we ſee the contrary by the experience of all ages; but that they are not ſufficient foundation for an unprejudiced mind to eſtabliſh a firm aſſent upon, is a thing not eaſy to be granted, chiefly upon this account, that an obligation to believe doth lie upon every one to whom theſe evidences of a Divine teſtimony are ſufficiently diſcovered. And otherwiſe of all ſins the ſin of unbelief, as to God revealing his mind, were the moſt excuſable and pardonable ſin; nay, it would be little leſs than a part of prudence; becauſe what can it be accounted but temerity and imprudence in any to believe a doctrine as true, only upon probable inducements? And what can it be but wiſdom to withhold aſſent upon a mere veriſimilitude? conſidering what the Lyric poet hath long ſince truly told us,

Pindar. Olymp. Od. i.

Καὶ πέ τι καὶ βροτῶν φρένας
ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον
δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις
ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.

That a falſehood may frequently ſeem truer to common underſtandings than truth itſelf; and, as Menander ſpeaks, τὸ πιθανὸν ἰσχὺν τῆς ἀληθείας ἔχει ἐνίοτε μείζω, καὶ πιθανωτέραν ὄχλῳ, *that a mere veriſimilitude may have more force on vulgar minds than truth hath.*

If

If therefore there be no evidences given ſufficient to carry the minds of men beyond mere probability, what ſin can it be in thoſe to diſbelieve, who cannot be obliged to believe as true what is only diſcovered as probable? I cannot therefore ſee how an obligation to believe a Divine teſtimony is conſiſtent with their opinion, who make the utmoſt which any outward evidences can extend to, to be only the bare credibility of the doctrine atteſted by them. I can very well ſatisfy myſelf with the ground and reaſon why the more ſubtle wits of the Church of Rome do aſſert this; for if nothing elſe can be produced by all motives of faith but only a probable perſuaſion of the truth of Chriſtian doctrine, then here comes in the faireſt pretence for the infallibility of their Church: for otherwiſe they tell us we can have no foundation for a Divine faith; for how can that be a foundation for Divine faith, which can reach no higher than a moral inducement, and beget only a probable perſuaſion of the credibility of the doctrine of Chriſt? But on what account thoſe who diſown the infallibility of the Church of Rome in the propoſal of matters of faith, ſhould yet conſent with thoſe of it in an hypotheſis taken up in probability, merely out of ſubſerviency to that moſt advantageous piece of the myſtery of iniquity, is not eaſy to reſolve; unleſs the over-fondneſs of ſome upon the doctrine of the ſchools, more than of the Goſpel, hath been the occaſion of it. For how agreeable can that opinion be to the Goſpel, which ſo evidently puts the moſt defenſive weapons into the hands of unbelief? For doubtleſs in the judgment of any rational perſon, a mere probable perſuaſion of the credibility of the doctrine of Chriſt, where an aſſent to it as true is required, can never be looked on as an act of faith: for if my aſſent to the truth of the thing be according to the ſtrength of the arguments inducing me to believe, and theſe arguments do only prove a probability of Divine teſtimony, my aſſent can be no ſtronger

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BOOK II. ſtronger than to a thing merely probable which is, that it may be, or not be, true; which is not properly aſſent, but a ſuſpending our judgments till ſome convincing argument be produced on either ſide. And therefore according to this opinion, thoſe who ſaw all the miracles which Chriſt did, could not be bound to believe in Chriſt, but only to have a favourable opinion of his perſon and doctrine, as a thing which, though not evidenced to be true by what he did, yet it was very piouſly credible: but they muſt have a care withal of venturing their belief too far, only on ſuch moral inducements as miracles were, for fear they ſhould go further than the force of the arguments would carry them. Had not this opinion now, think we, been a very probable way to have converted the world upon the preaching

John x. 38. of Chriſt and his apoſtles; when Chriſt ſaith, *Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him?* Nay, ſaith this opinion, that is more than we are bound to do; though we ſee thy works, we are not bound to believe thy teſtimony to be divine and certainly true; but we will do all we are bound to do, we will entertain a favourable opinion of thy perſon and doctrine, and wait for ſomewhat elſe, but we do not well know what, to perſuade us to believe. When the apoſtles preach the danger of unbelief,

Heb. ii. 3, 4. becauſe *the doctrine of the Goſpel was confirmed by ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt*, what a fair anſwer doth this opinion put into the mouths of infidels, that, notwithſtanding all theſe ſigns and wonders, they were never bound to believe the Goſpel as a certain truth, and therefore they hope the danger is not ſo great in neglecting the ſalvation promiſed by the Goſpel!

XI. I cannot conceive that men, otherwiſe learned and ſober, ſhould with ſo much confidence aſſert, that the rational evidences of a Divine teſtimony are inſufficient to prove a doctrine true, unleſs it be from hence,

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hence, that they find that, notwithſtanding the ſtrongeſt evidences, many perſons continue in unbelief. For, ſay they, *If theſe arguments were ſcientifical and demonſtrative* (as they ſpeak) *of the truth of the doctrine atteſted by them, then all perſons to whom they are propounded muſt certainly believe.* But this is very eaſily anſwered; for we ſpeak not of internal, but outward evidence; not of that in the ſubject, but of the object, or more fully of the reaſon of the thing, and not the event in us; for doubtleſs there may be undoubted truth and evidence in many things which ſome perſons either cannot or will not underſtand. If Epicurus ſhould contend ſtill that the ſun and ſtars are no bigger than they ſeem to be, will it hence follow that there can be no rational demonſtration of the contrary? Nay, if the way of demonſtration be offered him, and teleſcopes put into his hands, yet if he be reſolved to maintain his credit, and therefore his opinion, and will not uſe the teleſcopes, or ſuſpect ſtill they are intended only to deceive his ſight, what poſſible way will there be of convincing ſuch a perſon, though the thing be in itſelf demonſtrable? Now if the ſtrength of prejudice, or maintaining of credit, can prevail ſo much in matters of mathematical evidence to withhold aſſent, what power may we think a corrupt intereſt may have upon the underſtanding, as to the arguments which tend to prove the truth of that doctrine which is ſo repugnant to that carnal intereſt which the heart is already devoted to! Our bleſſed Saviour hath himſelf given us ſo full an account of the original and cauſes of unbelief in the perſons he converſed with, that that may yield us a ſufficient anſwer to this objection. He tells us the ground of it was not want of light; nay, there was light ſufficient to convince any, but that thoſe, to whom the light came, *loved darkneſs rather than it, becauſe their deeds were evil.* *That they could not believe while they received honour one of another, and ſought not the honour which was of God only*; John iii. 19. John v. 44.

i. e.

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i. e. that they were so greedy of applause from each other, that they would not impartially search into the truth of that doctrine which did touch their sores so to the quick, that they had rather have them fester upon them than go to the trouble of so sharp a cure. That the reason so few followed him, was because *the way was narrow and the gate strait, which men must go in at*; and therefore no wonder so few of the rich and proud Pharisees could get in at it: they were partly so swelled with a high opinion of themselves, and partly so loaden with their riches, that they thought it was to no purpose for them to think of going in at so strait a gate, while they were resolved to part with neither.

Matth. vii. 14.

That the final ground of the rejection of any was not want of evidence to bring them to believe, nor want of readiness in Christ to receive them if they did, but it was *a peevish, wilful, obstinate, malicious spirit, that they would not come to Christ*, nor believe his doctrine (for those import the same), but when the most convincing miracles were used, they would rather *attribute them to the prince of devils, than to the power of God.* And though our Saviour presently by rational and demonstrative arguments did prove the contrary to their faces, yet we see thereby it was a resolution not to be convinced, or yield to the truth, which was the cause why they did not believe. Now from this very instance of our Saviour's proceedings with the Pharisees by rational arguments, I demand, whether these arguments of our Saviour were sufficient foundations for a Divine assent to that truth, that our Saviour did not his miracles by any diabolical but by Divine power, or no? If they were, then it is evident that rational evidence may be a foundation for Divine faith, or that some motives to believe may be so strong as to be sufficient evidence of the truth and certainty of the doctrine. If these arguments were not sufficient proofs of what our Saviour spake, then well fare the Pharisees:

John v. 40.

Matth. xi. 24.

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riſees: it ſeems they ſaid nothing but what might be thus far juſtified, that the contrary to it could not be demonſtrated. And if the evidence of our Saviour's miracles were ſo great, as ſome ſuppoſe, that the Phariſees could not but be convinced that they were divine, but out of their malice and envy they uttered this blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, to keep the people from following Chriſt, then we hence infer two things: Firſt, *How ſtrong an evidence there was in the miracles of Chriſt*, when it convinced his moſt reſolute enemies that they were divine. Secondly, *What power a corrupt will may have over a convinced underſtanding*. For although the will may not hinder conviction, yet it may ſoon ſtifle it, by ſuggeſting thoſe things to the mind, which may divert it from thoſe convictions of truth, and ſeek to find out any ways to diſgrace it. It would be no difficult taſk to diſcover, in all thoſe inſtances wherein the unbelief of men is diſcovered in the New Teſtament, that the perſons guilty of it did not proceed like rational men, or ſuch as deſired truth, but were wholly carried away through paſſion, intereſt, prejudice, diſaffection, or ſome other cauſe of that nature; which may give us a ſufficient account why thoſe perſons did not believe, although there might be clear and undoubted evidence to perſuade them to it. But although I aſſert that theſe rational evidences are ſufficient arguments of the truth of the doctrine they come to manifeſt, yet I would not be ſo underſtood, that I thereby reſolve all religion into a mere act of reaſon and knowledge, and that no more power is required in the underſtanding to believe the Goſpel, than to believe a mathematical demonſtration: which is another objection ſome lay in the way of this opinion; but it is not difficult getting over it. For the ſufficiency which I attribute to rational evidence is not abſolute and ſimple, but *in ſuo genere*, as an objective evidence. Notwithſtanding this, the whole work of the Spirit of God,

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God, in its peculiar energy and way of operation upon the ſoul, is left entire to itſelf: but then, when the Spirit works as to the planting of a truly Divine faith, I do not think that it only perſuades the ſoul of the truth of a Divine teſtimony, but withal repreſents the truths revealed by that teſtimony, with all that excellency and ſuitableneſs that there is in them, that by the moſt agreeable, yet effectual influence of the Spirit upon the ſoul, it cheerfully embraceth that truth which is revealed, and cordially yields up itſelf in obedience to it. This is the Divine faith which the Scripture acquaints us with, and not ſuch a one as merely believes the truth of a Divine teſtimony: and as to the production of this faith, I acknowledge mere rational evidence to be inſufficient, becauſe they proceed in two very different ways; the one is to ſatisfy men's minds of the truth of the doctrine; the other is to bring them effectually to adhere unto it. The aſſerting of the one therefore doth no more tend to deſtroy the other, than the ſaying that a teleſcope will help us to diſcover very much of the heavenly bodies, doth imply that a blind man may ſee them, if he makes but uſe of them. Although therefore the natural man cannot ſavingly apprehend the things of God; yet there may be ſo much rational evidence going along with Divine revelation, that ſuppoſing reaſon to be pure, and not corrupted and ſteeped in ſenſe as now it is, it would diſcover ſpiritual evidence to be the moſt real and convincing evidence. Thus far we have proved, *That where there is any infallible teſtimony, there is ſufficient rational evidence going along with it, to make it appear that it is from God.*

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CHAP. IX.

The rational Evidence of the Truth of Chriſtian Religion from Miracles.

I. *The Poſſibility of Miracles appears from God and Providence; the Evidence of a Divine Teſtimony by them. God alone can really alter the Courſe of Nature. The Devil's Power of working Miracles conſidered. Of* Simon Magus, Apollonius. *The Cures in the Temple of* Æſculapius *at* Rome, *&c.* II. *God never works Miracles but for ſome particular End. The particular Reaſons of the Miracles of Chriſt. The repealing the Law of* Moſes, *which had been ſettled by Miracles. Why Chriſt checked the Phariſees for demanding a Sign, when himſelf appeals to his Miracles. The Power of Chriſt's Miracles on many who did not thoroughly believe.* III. *Chriſt's Miracles made it evident that he was the Meſſias, becauſe the Predictions were fulfilled in him. Why* John Baptiſt *wrought no Miracles.* IV. *Chriſt's Miracles neceſſary for the Overthrow of the Devil's Kingdom.* V. *Of the Demoniacs and Lunatics in the Goſpel, and in the Primitive Church. The Power of the Name of Chriſt over them largely proved by ſeveral Teſtimonies.* VI. *The Evidence thence of a Divine Power in Chriſt.* VII. *Of counterfeit Diſpoſſeſſions. Of Miracles wrought among Infidels.* VIII. *Of the future State of the Church.* IX. *The Neceſſity of the Miracles of Chriſt, as to the Propagation of Chriſtian Religion: that proved from the Condition of the Publiſhers, and the Succeſs of the Doctrine. The Apoſtles knew the Hazard of their Employment before they entered into it.* X. *The Boldneſs and Reſolution of the Apoſtles notwithſtanding this, compared with Heathen Philoſophers.* XI. *No Motive could carry the Apoſtles through ther Employment, but the Truth of their Doc-*

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trine; XII. *not seeking the Honour, Profit, or Pleasure of the World.* XIII. *The Apostles' Evidence of the Truth of their Doctrine lay in being Eye-witnesses of our Saviour's Miracles and Resurrection.* XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII. *That attested by themselves; their Sufficiency thence for preaching the Gospel.* XIX. *Of the Nature of the Doctrine of the Gospel; Contrariety of it to natural Inclinations.* XX. *Strange Success of it, notwithstanding it came not with human Power. No Christian Emperor, till the Gospel universally preached.* XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV. *The Weakness and Simplicity of the Instruments which preached the Gospel. From all which the great Evidence of the Power of Miracles is proved.*

I. 5 Hypoth.

OF all rational evidences which tend to confirm the truth of a Divine testimony, there can be none greater than a power of working miracles for confirmation that the testimony which is revealed is infallible. The possibility of a power of miracles cannot be questioned by any who assert a *Deity* and a *Providence*; for by the same power that things were either at first produced, or are still conserved (which is equivalent to the other) the course of nature may be altered, and things caused which are beyond the power of inferior causes: for though that be an immutable law of nature as to *physical* beings, that every thing remains in the course and order wherein it was set at the creation; yet that only holds till the same power which set it in that order shall otherwise dispose of it. Granting then the possibility of miracles, the subject of this *hypothesis* is: That a power of miracles is the clearest evidence of a Divine testimony, which will appear from these following considerations.

1. *God alone can really alter the course of nature.* I speak not of such things which are apt only to raise admiration in us, because of our unacquaintedness with the causes of them, or manner of their production, which are thence called *wonders*, much less of mere

mere juggles and impoſtures, whereby the eyes of men are deceived; but I ſpeak of ſuch things as are in themſelves either contrary to, or above the courſe of nature, i. e. that order which is eſtabliſhed in the univerſe. The Devil, no queſtion, may, and doth often deceive the world, and may, by the ſubtlety and agility of his nature, perform ſuch things as may amuſe the minds of men, and ſometimes put them to it, to find a difference between them and real miracles, if they only make their ſenſes judges of them. And ſuch kind of wonders, though they are but ſparingly done, and with a kind of ſecreſy (as though they were conſulting with Catiline about the burning Rome), yet the Devil would have ſome (eſpecially when ignorance and ſuperſtition are aſcendants) to keep up his intereſt in the world. Or elſe, when he is like to be diſpoſſeſſed and thrown out of all, he tries his utmoſt to keep as many to him as may be: thus when the Spirit of God appeared in the miracles of our Saviour and his Apoſtles and the primitive Church, he then conjured up all the infernal powers to do ſomething parallel, to keep poſſeſſion of his idolatrous temples, as long as he could. Thus we find Simon Magus dogging the Apoſtles (as it were) at the heels, that by his magic he might ſtagger the faith of people concerning the miracles wrought by the Apoſtles: after him Apollonius appeared upon the ſtage; but his wonders are ſuch pitiful things, compared with thoſe wrought by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, that it could be nothing but malice in Hierocles to mention him in competition with Chriſt. But thoſe things, which ſeem a great deal more conſiderable than either of theſe, were, the cure of a blind man, by Veſpaſian in Egypt, mentioned by Tacitus and Suetonius, wherein there was a palpable imitation of our Saviour's curing the blind man in the Goſpel; for the man told Veſpaſian, *reſtituturum oculos ſi inſpuiſſet, that he ſhould receive his ſight by his ſpittle:* ſo Spartianus tells us of a woman that was

Sueton. Veſp. c. 7.

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cured of her blindneſs by kiſſing the knees of the emperor Adrian; and Boxhornius hath produced an old table, in the temple of Æſculapius at Rome, of ſeveral diſeaſed perſons that were cured there. *A blind man, in the time of Antoninus, was cured by this oracle: he muſt come to the altar, and kneel there; from the right ſide he muſt turn to the left, and put five fingers upon the altar, and then lift up his hands and touch his eyes, and ſo was cured. Another, called Lucius, cured of the pain of his ſide, by mixing the aſhes of the altar with the wine, and applying it to his ſide. Another cured of ſpitting of blood by the kernel of a pine-apple and honey, uſed three days. A fourth cured of blindneſs, by the blood of a white cock and honey uſed three days upon his eyes.* Theſe are the moſt conſiderable of all the pretended miracles done about that time, when the noiſe of the Chriſtian miracles were ſpread ſo far and done ſo frequently, that they challenged the Heathens again and again to bring forth any perſon poſſeſſed with a Devil: if he did not confeſs to them that he was a Devil, though he made the Heathens believe that he was a God, they were contented to leave their blood in the place.

Boxhorn. Qu. Rom. qu. 7.

Tertull. Apol. c. 23. Ed. Pamelius.

For thus Tertullian ſpeaks in his Apology to them. *Edatur hic aliquis ſub tribunalibus veſtris, quem Dæmone agi conſtet: juſſus à quolibet Chriſtiano loqui ſpiritus ille, tam ſe Dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam alibi Deum de falſo: æque producatur aliquis ex iis qui de Deo pati exiſtimantur, qui aris inhalantes numen de nidore concipiunt, qui ructando curantur, qui anhelando profantur. Iſta ipſa Virgo cæleſtis pluviarum pollicitatrix, iſte ipſe Æſculapius medicinarum demonſtrator, aliàs de morituris ſcordii & denatii & Aſclepiadoti ſubminiſtrator, niſi ſe Dæmones confeſſi fuerint, Chriſtiano mentiri non audentes, ibidem illius Chriſtiani procaciſſimi ſanguinem fundite. Quid iſto opere manifeſtius, quid hac probatione fidelius? ſimplicitas veritatis in medio eſt; virtus illi ſua aſſiſtit; nihil ſuſpicari licebit, magia aut aliqua fallacia fieri. Dictis non ſtetis, ſi oculi veſtri & aures*

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aures permiſerint vobis. In theſe very daring words we ſee how the Chriſtians appealed to their ſenſes, even with the hazard of their own lives, that they would make even Æſculapius himſelf confeſs what he was, and by whoſe power all the cures were wrought upon the dreamers in his temples. And for the manner of the Devil's cures, the ſame author explains it thus. *Lædunt primo, dehinc remedia præcipiunt ad miraculum nova, ſive contraria, poſt quæ deſinunt lædere, & curaſſe creduntur. They firſt poſſeſs the bodies themſelves* (as demoniacs were common in thoſe times), *and affect it with various diſtempers, afterwards, upon uſing the ſtrange remedies preſcribed by Æſculapius, they forſake their ſtation, and the perſon is cured.* And for the cures performed by the Emperors, thoſe who conſider what various artifices were about that time uſed to procure an opinion of divinity in the Emperors, will not much wonder that ſuch reports ſhould be ſpread of them, or that any perſons ſhould feign theſe diſtempers to give themſelves out to be cured by them. But granting ſomewhat wonderful in theſe, what are they, compared with thoſe done by Chriſtians? And who ever would lay down his life to atteſt any of them? So that though the Devil by his ſubtlety may eaſily impoſe upon ſpectators' eyes, yet it was impoſſible for him, by any power of his own, to alter the courſe of nature, or produce any real miracle. For every true miracle is a production of ſomething out of nothing (which cannot be done by leſs than an omnipotent arm), and that either in the thing itſelf, or the manner of producing it. In the thing itſelf, when it is of that nature that it cannot be produced by any ſecond cauſes, as the raiſing of the dead; in the manner of doing it, when though the thing lies within the poſſibility of ſecond cauſes, yet it is performed without the help of any of them; as in the cure of diſeaſes without any uſe of means, *by a word ſpeaking, the touch of a garment*, &c. Now that all

Ibid. c. 22.

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BOOK II. those miracles, which were wrought in confirmation of the Christian doctrine, were such true and proper miracles, will be discovered afterwards.

II. 2. *God never alters the course of nature, but for some very considerable end*; for otherwise, when he did it, it would not be taken notice of, nor thought to be an alteration of the order of nature, but only some rare contingencies which lie hid in the order of causes, but only break out at some times; of which sort are all those things which the ignorant world is apt to account as prodigies. Of all which rare contingencies in nature, I say, as the Roman orator doth, *Si quod raro fit, id portentum putandum est, sapientem esse portentum est; sapius enim mulam peperisse arbitror, quam sapientem fuisse. If all rare contingencies be accounted prodigies, a wise man is certainly the greatest prodigy.* But these are quite of another nature from true miracles, which are immediately produced by a Divine power, and intended for a confirmation of some Divine testimony. There are now several weighty reasons which might make miracles necessary in the time of our Saviour, as an evidence of his Divine authority and power.

Cicero de Div. l. ii. c. 28.

1. *That he came to take down that way of worship, which had been at first settled by a power of miracles in Moses.* God would not be so much wanting to the faith of that people which had received their law by signs and wonders from heaven, but that there should be as strong an evidence given to them, that the fulness of time was come, when that dispensation was to have an end, and to give place to one more perfect, which was to be established instead of it. Upon which account the Jews might rationally enquire after a sign, where any new revelation was discovered, which might null the obligation of any former law. And when they enquire so much after a sign, our Saviour doth not reject the enquiry as in itself unreasonable, but as made in an unreasonable manner; for they would not be contented with the miracles which

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which our Saviour wrought, which ſufficiently manifeſted a Divine power, but all that they deſired was, *a ſign from heaven*, i. e. ſuch as were done at the giving of the law, the thundering and lightnings there; or, as the *raining of manna in the wilderneſs*. Now our Saviour juſtly checks this demand as importune and impudent; partly as knowing upon what account they aſked it, merely to tempt him, and not out of any real deſire of ſatisfaction; and partly becauſe of that abundant evidence which was given in the miraculous cures which were wrought by him, which were more ſuitable to that deſign of doing good in the world, than all the thunder-claps on Mount Sinai were: neither were the people in a condition to be fed by manna, as they were in the wilderneſs, God graciouſly ſuiting the diſcoveries of his power to the peculiar advantages of the people which they were made to, and the diſpenſation they uſhered in; thoſe terrible ſigns at Mount Sinai being very ſuitable to the ſeverity and rigour of the law, and the gracious miracles of our Saviour to the ſweetneſs and grace of the Goſpel. And on this account our Saviour charged the Jews with hypocriſy, in requiring a σημεῖον, as ſomething above δύναμις, a prodigy rather than a miracle. *An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given it but that of the prophet Jonas*, i. e. this people, which are ſo far from the faith of Abraham (and therefore are ſuppoſititious children), that no miracles which I do will convince them, but they ſeek only to have their humours gratified, more than their faith confirmed by ſome prodigy from heaven, ſhall not by me be thus gratified; but having done enough already to perſuade them, if they had any heart to believe, inſtead of a ſign from heaven, they ſhall have only one from the earth; and that not ſo much intended for the converſion of ſuch wilful unbelievers, as for the teſtifying my innocency to the world, viz. his reſurrection from the dead. And ſo

Matth. xii. 38. xvi. 1.

Matth. xii. 39.

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John v. 36. x. 25. John xv. 24.

John i. 49. ii. 11.

was

was *perſuaded that he was a teacher come from God*; *becauſe no man could do the miracles which Chriſt did, unleſs God were with him.* And before him many of the Jews at Jeruſalem *believed in his name when they ſaw the miracles which he did*; yet theſe perſons *Chriſt would not truſt himſelf with, becauſe he knew their hearts* were not ſubdued to his doctrine, though their underſtandings were convinced by his miracles. And after this others of the Jews that looked not on him as the Meſſias, yet it is ſaid they believed on him on the account of his miracles. *And many of the people believed on him, and ſaid, When Chriſt cometh, will he do more miracles than theſe which this man hath done?* Although herein they were moſt unreaſonable in believing the evidence, and not the truth atteſted by it; in believing Chriſt to be one ſent from God by his miracles, and yet not believing him to be the Meſſias, which was the thing atteſted by them. Not that mere miracles would prove the perſon to be the Meſſias who did them, but the miracles proved the teſtimony to be divine. Now that which Chriſt delivered to them as a Divine teſtimony, was his being the Meſſias; and therefore by the ſame reaſon they believed him to be ſent from God, they ought to have believed him to be the Meſſias; for one ſent from God could never falſify in the main of his meſſage, as this was of our Saviour's preaching. And hence it is obſervable our Saviour did not ſhew forth his Divine power till he entered upon his office of preaching; thereby making it appear he intended this as the great evidence of the truth of the doctrine which he preached to them. And herein the blind man in the Goſpel ſaw more truth and reaſon than the whole court of Sanhedrin, before which in probability he was convented about his cure by Chriſt; for when they ſought to get ſomething out of him in diſparagement of our Saviour's perſon and miracle, he ſharply and roundly tells them, when they ſaid they knew God ſpake to Moſes, *but for this fellow,*

John iii. 2. John ii. 23. John vii. 31. John ix. 29, 30.

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low, we know not from whence he is. Why herein, ſaith he, *is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.* As though he had ſaid, Is it not plain that this man is employed by God in the world, by the miracles which he doth? for otherwiſe God would not ſo readily aſſiſt him in doing ſuch great works; *for we know that God heareth not ſinners: but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth,* i. e. if this man pretended a commiſſion from heaven falſely (whereby he would be the greateſt of ſinners), can we think God would ſo miraculouſly aſſiſt him? But we know by our law, if one comes with a commiſſion from God, and draw men not to idolatry, which is meant by a worſhipper of God, ſuch a one God is preſent with, and we are bound to believe him. And for this very miracle, or curing one born blind, was the like ever heard of before? Did ever Moſes or the prophets do it? Thus we ſee what ſtrong rational evidence there was in this miracle of Chriſt in the judgment of this blind man, which he uttered with ſo much reaſon before the court of Sanhedrin, when he knew how like he was to be excommunicated for it; and yet this very perſon was as yet ignorant that Chriſt was the true Meſſias, as appears by the ſequel of the chapter; but upon Chriſt's revelation of himſelf to him, *he preſently believed on him.* How ſtrangely irrational were the Jews then in rejecting our Saviour, when his miracles not only exceeded thoſe of Moſes both in number and quality, but, which was more, they ſaw themſelves the miracles which Chriſt did, but they received thoſe of Moſes only upon the credit of their fathers! And from the ſtrength of the evidence ariſing from the power of miracles, it is that St. Peter tells the promiſcuous aſſembly, Acts ii. 22. *That Jeſus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by miracles, wonders, and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of them, as they*

Ver. 33.

Ver. 31.

Ver. 36.

Ver. 38.

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they themſelves alſo knew. He appeals to their own knowledge, which he would not certainly have done, had it not been in a caſe beyond all diſpute among them. Which was a thing ſo notorious among them, that we find the Phariſees themſelves confeſſing it: *What do we? for this man doth many miracles.* Now then in a nation whoſe religion had been eſtabliſhed by miracles, and the certainty of the truth of it, among thoſe who then profeſſed it, did depend ſo much upon the conſtant credit which the report of the miracles done at the ſettling of their law had among them, what could be a more rational and convincing way of proceeding, than for our Saviour to manifeſt, by a greater power of miracles in himſelf, the undoubted credentials of his commiſſion from heaven, and that he was the true Meſſias, which was foretold by their own moſt ſacred and authentical records? Which will appear more, CHAP. IX. John xi. 47.

Becauſe the power of miracles did evidently declare that he was the very perſon promiſed. For if the exact correſpondency of the event to the predictions in a nation owning them as divine be an undoubted evidence that they are exactly fulfilled, our Saviour was moſt certainly the perſon ſo often ſpoken of in the Old Teſtament. For many of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament concerning the Meſſias, if they were not fulfilled in Chriſt, in the conditions the Jews have been in ſince their diſperſion (which fell out exactly according to the prediction of Chriſt), it is impoſſible they ſhould be fulfilled at all: ſo that either the predictions muſt loſe their Divine authority, or they muſt be accompliſhed in our bleſſed Saviour. For as Tertullian ſharply ſays to the Jews, *Redde ſtatum Judææ quem Chriſtus inveniat, & alium contende venire; let the people of the Jews be in their former condition, and then plead for a Meſſias to come.* For can any thing be more plain than that the Meſſias was to be born in Bethlehem of Judæa? But where is that now? And how long ſince the Jews enjoyed III. 2 Hypoth. Tertull. c. Judæos, c. 13. Ed. Pam.

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enjoyed any civil polity there? What is become of the ſecond Temple, in the time of which the deſire of all nations ſhould come? Is not Jeruſalem already deſtroyed, and the oblation there long ſince ceaſed, which was to come to paſs ſo ſoon after the Meſſias, and did accordingly? Is not *the ſceptre yet departed from Judah*, and *the lawgiver from between his feet?* and is not Shiloh yet come? What ſtrange unintelligible weeks were thoſe of Daniel, if they were extended to ſo indefinite a ſpace of time as the Jews pretend? And if indefinite, what certain ground could from thence be gathered of any time wherein their accompliſhment was to be expected? But not to expatiate on thoſe things which are already ſo largely proved beyond all poſſibility of contradiction, by the ancient and modern learned writers againſt the Jews: to inſiſt therefore on our preſent buſineſs: Are not the prophecies concerning the miracles which the Meſſias ſhould work, exactly fulfilled in Chriſt? *Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped; then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing.* He muſt be a great ſtranger in the hiſtory of the New Teſtament, that is to ſeek for an exact fulfilling of this prophecy. Nay, and the Jewiſh Midraſch, upon Pſalm cxlvi. 8. ſaith, that when *Meſſias comes, he ſhould open the eyes of the blind*; and the Jews themſelves often ſpeak of the great miracles which the Meſſias ſhould do when he appears; and therefore out of their own mouths will they be condemned, when the miracles of Chriſt make it ſo evident that he was the true Meſſias. Hence when John Baptiſt ſent his Diſciples to Chriſt, for them to be fully ſatisfied concerning him, he bids them tell him, *the blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, and the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raiſed up*, &c. as though the mentioning of theſe miracles was ſufficient to make it appear to them who he was whom they came to enquire after. And therefore it is obſervable, that John Baptiſt himſelf,

Iſa. xxxv. 5, 6.

V. Grot. in John ix. 32.

Matt. xi. 5.

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himſelf, though greater than the prophets, nay, *than whom there was not a greater born of women*, by our Saviour's own teſtimony, yet of him it is ſaid, *that he wrought no miracle:* of which no account can be given ſo probable and rational, as that God in his infinite wiſdom was pleaſed ſo to order it, that the evidence of our Saviour's being the Meſſias might be made more clear by the miracles which he wrought, that the minds of the people might not be diſtracted between John and Chriſt; he therefore reſerved the glory of miracles wholly to the name of Chriſt, that there might be no pretence of competition between John and *him*. CHAP. IX. Matt. xi. 9, 11. John x. 41.

IV. 3 Hypoth.

Another reaſon of the neceſſity of miracles in our Saviour, by way of rational evidence, is, *the overthrowing the power and kingdom of the Devil in the world.* For which purpoſe it is obſervable, that the Devil had ſcarce ever greater power over the bodies of men as well as their ſouls, than at that time; thence we read of ſuch a multitude of demoniacs in the Goſpel. For it ſeems very harſh to interpret thoſe merely of epileptical and lunatic perſons, both becauſe the δαιμονιζόμενοι, and σελληνιαζόμενοι, and παραλυτικοὶ, are mentioned diſtinctly; and that it appears by the primitive Church afterwards, how frequent it was to eject the Devil out of poſſeſſed perſons. Nay, ſo far am I from thinking that the demoniacs were mere lunatics, that I rather think with Voſſius, that the lunatics were truly demoniacs; only they were not conſtantly under the power of the Devil, but as their paroxyſms returned upon them, the Devil loving to fiſh in ſuch troubled waters. And thence the ſame perſon is called a lunatic in one place, who is called a demoniac in another; becauſe he did *ruere in principiis lunationum*, as the Arabic verſion expreſſeth it; or, as Ruſticus Elpidius more fully explains it, Matt. iv. 24. Voſſius de Idol. l. ii. c. 19. Matt. xvii. 15. Luke ix. 39.

Repſerat in medium rabies horrenda furoris
Dæmonis afflatu, propria qui peſte nocivus
Allidit Ruſt. Elpid. lib. v.

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Allidit captas fœdo diſcrimine mentes,
Menſtrua deciduos cum Luna recolligit ignes.

Theophylact is of opinion, that the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, ſuppoſed that the ſouls of dead men became demons, and thence we read in Scripture of the demoniacs among the tombs: but it is far more probable which Grotius conceives, that the Jews were of opinion that the ſouls of dead men did hover up and down about their bodies, and that theſe were ſo long under the Devil's power, which many of the Jews to this day believe, and make uſe of the inſtance of the Pythoniſs raiſing Samuel; on which account the Devils, to favour an opinion ſo advantageous to their intereſt, might appear with greater terror and fury about their burying-places; as we ſee they did in thoſe poſſeſſed perſons. But on whatever account it was, we find it evident, that about the time of our Saviour's appearance, and ſome time after, the truly ἐνεργέμενοι were very frequent; whether it were that the Devil, by ſuch frequent poſſeſſions of perſons, and making them to do ſuch ſtrange things, might thereby endeavour to invalidate the evidence of our Saviour's miracles (from whence it is probable the Phariſees raiſed their calumny, that Chriſt did miracles by Beelzebub, becauſe they ſaw ſo many ſtrange appearances cauſed by poſſeſſed perſons), or whether it were through the admirable providence of God, which might give Satan the greater liberty at that time, on purpoſe to heighten the glory of our Saviour in diſpoſſeſſing of him, and thereby to give the higheſt rational evidence that his power was of God, which tended ſo much to the deſtruction of the kingdom of Satan.

Matt. viii. 28.

V. And hence the primitive Chriſtians did ſo much triumph, and, as it were, inſult over the Devil whereever they found him, making him to remove his lodgings from poſſeſſed perſons, by a writ of ejection from the name of Chriſt. Thence Origen rationally concludes

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concludes that Chriſt had his power given him from above, becauſe at his very name the devils forſook the bodies which they had poſſeſſed, Εἰ γὰρ μὴ θεόθεν ἦν αὐτῷ δοθεῖσα σύςασις, ȣ̓κ ἂν καὶ δαίμονες τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτȣ̃ ἀπαγγελλομένῳ μόνον εἴκοντες ἀνεχώρȣν ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτῶν πολεμουμένων. And he elſewhere tells us, that even the meaneſt ſort of Chriſtians, without any ceremony, but merely by their prayers, did ordinarily eject the Devil out of men's bodies: ὡς ἐπίπαν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιȣ̃τον πράττȣσι, παριςάσης τῆς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ Χριςȣ̃ χάριτος τὸ τῶν δαιμόνων εὐτελὲς καὶ ἀσθενὲς, ȣ̓ πάντως δεόμενον, πρὸς τὸ ἡττηθῆναι, καὶ εἶξαν ὑπεξελθεῖν ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἀνθρώπου καὶ σώματος, σοφȣ̃ τινὸς καὶ δυνατοῦ ἐν ταῖς λογικαῖς περὶ τῆς πίςεως ἀποδείξεσι, *Ordinary Chriſtians*, ſaith he, *moſt commonly do this, the grace of Chriſt, by its word, thereby diſcovering the contemptibleneſs and infirmity of the devils, that in order to their ejection they did not want any learned or experienced Chriſtian.* And for this they appeal to the Heathens themſelves; as appears not only by the challenge of Tertullian, already mentioned, but by the teſtimony of almoſt all of them who have writ againſt the Heathens in vindication of the Chriſtian religion. Thence Minutius Felix, *Hæc omnia ſciunt plerique, pars veſtrum, ipſos dæmonas de ſemetipſis confiteri, quoties à nobis tormentis verborum, & orationis incendiis de corporibus exiguntur. Ipſe Saturnus & Serapis, & Jupiter, & quicquid dæmonum colitis, victi dolore quod ſunt eloquuntur: nec utique in turpitudinem ſui, nonnullis præſertim veſtrum aſſiſtentibus, mentiuntur. Ipſis teſtibus eos eſſe dæmonas, de ſe verum confitentibus credite; adjurati enim per Deum verum & ſolum, inviti, miſeri, corporibus inhorreſcunt; & vel exſiliunt ſtatim, vel evaneſcunt gradatim, prout fides patientis adjuvat, aut gratia curantis aſpirat.* Can we now think the Devil ſhould not only forſake his tyranny over the bodies of men, but let go ſo advantageous a pillar of his tyranny over the conſciences of men in idolatrous worſhip, as the concealing himſelf was, had he not been forced to it by a power far greater than

Orig. c. Celſ. l. iii. p. 133. Ed. Spencer.

Ibid. l. vii. p. 334.

Minut. Felix, p. 252. Ed. Ouz.

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than his own? So Cyprian ad Demetrianum appeals to him, being the Proconsul of Africa, about the same thing (who had written sharply against the Christians), for speaking of the devils whom they worshipped in their idols, *O si audire eos velles & videre, quando à nobis adjurantur & torquentur spiritalibus flagris & verborum tormentis de obsessis corporibus ejiciuntur, quando ejulantes & gementes voce humana, & potestate divina flagella & verbera sentientes, venturum judicium confitentur. Veni & cognosce vera esse quæ dicimus.* And a little after, *Videbis sub manu nostra stare victos, & tremere captivos, quos tu suspicis & veneraris ut Dominos.* Did ever any of the Heathen magicians (of which there were good store) extort such things from the devils, as the Christians did, merely by their prayers and invocations of the name of God and Christ? Did they ever make them confess to be what they were, not only in possessed bodies, but in their temples too? That was beyond the power of their Ephesian letters, or any of their magical incantations. Did the devils ever dread so much the name of Socrates or Aristides, as they did that of God and Christ? Of which Lactantius thus speaks, *Quo audito tremunt, exclamant, & uri se verberarique testantur, & interrogati, qui sint, quomodo venerint, quando in hominem irrepserint, confitentur. Sic extorti, & excruciati virtute divini numinis exultant. Propter hæc verba & minas, sanctos & justos viros semper oderunt.* And even Apollo himself at the name of Christ trembled as much as ever the Pythian prophetess did in her greatest furies. So Prudentius tells us,

Cyprian. ad Demetr. p. 191. Ed. Oxon.

Lactant. de Justitia, lib. v. c. 21. Ed. Oxon.

Prudent. Apotheos. v. 470.

——*Torquetur Apollo*
Nomine percussus Christi, nec fulmina verbi
Ferre potest; agitant miserum tot verbera linguæ,
Quot laudata Dei resonant miracula Christi.

Firmicus de Errore Prof. Relig. ad calcem.

To these we may add what Firmicus saith to the same purpose, *Ecce Dæmon est quem colis; cum Dei & Christi ejus nomen audierit, contremiscit, & ut interrogantibus*

tibus nobis respondeat trepidantia verba, vix se colligit; adhærens homini laceratur, uritur, vapulat, & statim de commissis sceleribus confitetur. By which testimonies it appears what power over Satan, when he was in his kingdom, the Christians, by the power of Christ, had; not as though the bare name of Christ had so great an efficacy in the ejection of devils, as Origen seems to be of opinion (in a discourse about the efficacy of names, unworthy of so great a philosopher), but that God might manifest to the world the truth that was contained in that name, he did give a power to such as made use of it, of working miracles by it. And thence we read in Scripture, that some who were not thoroughly Christians, but yet professed the truth of the Gospel, and that what they did was for the honour of Christ, *had a power of casting out devils, and doing many wonderful things through his name.*

CHAP. IX.

Origen c. Celf. l. i.

Matt. vii. 22.

VI. By these and many other testimonies which might be produced out of the primitive Church, we find an exact accomplishment of our Saviour's promise to his Disciples when he took his leave of them: *And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils*, &c. This power then in the primitive Church had a twofold argument in it, both as it was a manifestation of the truth of the predictions of our Saviour, and as it was an evidence of the Divine power of Christ, when his name, so long after his ascension, had so great a command over all the infernal spirits; and that so evidently, that at that time when the Christians did as it were tyrannize over Satan so in his own territories, yet then the greatest of his magicians had no power to hurt the bodies of the Christians; which is a thing Origen takes much notice of. For when Celsus saith, from Diogenes Egyptius, that magic could *only hurt ignorant and wicked men, and had no power over philosophers*, Origen replies, first, that philosophy was no such charm against the power of magic, as appears

Mark xvi. 17.

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by Mæragenes, who writ the ſtory of Apollonius Tyaneus, the famous magician and philoſopher, who therein mentions how Euphrates and an Epicurean (*οὐκ ἀγενεῖς φιλόσοφοι, no vulgar philoſophers*) were catched by the magic of Apollonius (and although Philoſtratus diſown this hiſtory of Mæragenes as fabulous, yet he that thinks Philoſtratus for that to be of any greater credit, is much deceived: of whom Lud. Vives gives this true character; that he doth *magna Homeri mendacia majoribus mendaciis corrigere, mend one hole and make three*). But, ſaith Origen, as to the Chriſtians, this is undoubtedly true: Διαβεβαιώμεθα δὲ ἡμεῖς καὶ τῇ πείρᾳ παραλαβόντες, ὅτι οἱ κατὰ χριστιανισμὸν διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεραπεύοντες θεὸν, καὶ βιοῦντες κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον αὐτοῦ ταῖς προσαχθείσαις τε εὐχαῖς συνεχέστερον καὶ θεόντως νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας χρώμενοι, ἔστε μαγείᾳ ἔστε δαιμονίοις εἰσιν ἀλωτοί. *This*, ſaith he, *we are moſt certain of, and have found it, by experience, true, that thoſe who, according to the principles of Chriſtianity, do worſhip God over all, through Jeſus, and do live according to the Goſpel, being conſtant in their ſolemn prayers night and day, are not obnoxious to the power of any magic or Devils whatſoever.* Now then if the Devil, who had then ſo much power over others, had none upon the true followers of Chriſt; and if, inſtead of that, they had ſo great a commanding power over the Devil even in things which tended moſt to his diſadvantage, not only diſlodging him out of bodies, but out of his idolatrous temples, what can be more evident than that this power, which was ſo efficacious for the overthrowing the kingdom of Satan, muſt needs be far greater than the power of Satan is? For it is an undoubted maxim in natural reaſon, that *whatever is put out of its former place by force and violence, is extruded by ſomething ſtronger than itſelf*; for if the force on either ſide were equal, there could be no diſpoſſeſſing of either: if any thing then be caſt out of its former poſſeſſion unwillingly, it is an undeniable proof there was ſome power greater than his who was

Lud. Vives de Trad. Diſc. l. v.

Origen cont. Celſ. l. vi. p. 302. Ed. Spencer.

was diſpoſſeſſed. Now we cannot conceive, if there be ſuch malignant ſpirits, as by many undeniable proofs it is evident there are, that they ſhould willingly quit their poſſeſſions to ſuch a doctrine, which tends to the unavoidable ruin of their intereſt in the world: if then the power of this doctrine hath overthrown the Devil's kingdom in the world, wherever it hath been truly entertained, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that this power is far above the power of any damned ſpirits. Now what folly and madneſs was it in the Heathens to worſhip thoſe for Gods, which they could not but ſee, if they would open their eyes, were under ſo great ſlavery to a power above them; which could make them confeſs what was moſt to their diſadvantage in the preſence of their great adorers? CHAP. IX.

VII. Neither ought the many counterfeits and impoſtures which have been in the world in this kind ſince the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtian religion (among the advancers of particular intereſts and deſigns), make us ſuſpect the truth of thoſe things which were done in the firſt ages of the Church of Chriſt. For, firſt, it ſtands to the greateſt reaſon, that the ſtrongeſt arguments for the truth of a religion ought to be fetched from the ages of its firſt appearance in the world. If then the evidence be undoubted as to thoſe firſt times, we ought to embrace our religion as true, whatever the impoſtures have been among thoſe who have apparently gone aſide from that purity and ſimplicity of the Goſpel, which had ſo great power. Then, ſecondly, if all that hath been done in this kind of ejecting Devils, where Chriſtianity is owned, be acknowledged for impoſtures, one of theſe two things muſt be ſuppoſed as the ground of it; either that there was no ſuch thing as a real poſſeſſion by the Devil, or elſe there was no ſuch thing as a diſpoſſeſſing him. If the firſt, then hereby will be ſeen a confirmation of our former argument, that where Chriſtianity is owned, by the power of that the Devil is more curbed and reſtrained than where it

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BOOK II. is not, or elſe is much over-run with ignorance and ſuperſtition. Of the latter, the ages of the Chriſtian Church, from the 10th century to the beginning of the 16th current, are a clear evidence; of the firſt, all thoſe who have been converſant in the places where Paganiſm or groſs idolatry do yet reign, will bring in their creditable teſtimonies how tyrannical the power of the Devil is yet among them. If it be not ſo, then, where careful endeavours have been uſed for retrieving the ancient purity of Chriſtian doctrine and worſhip, we ought to impute it to the power of Him who is ſtronger than Satan, who, wherever he comes to dwell, doth diſpoſſeſs him of his former habitations. If the ſecond then be entertained as the ground of concluding all things as impoſtures which are accounted diſpoſſeſſions of Satan, viz. that he never is really diſpoſſeſſed, then it muſt either be ſaid, that where he is once ſeiſed, there is no poſſibility of ejecting him, which is to ſay, that the Devil hath an abſolute and infinite power, and that there is no power greater than his, which is to own him for God; or elſe that God ſuffers him to tyrannize where and how he will, which is contrary to Divine Providence, and the care God takes of the world, and of the good of mankind; or elſe, laſtly, that thoſe perſons who pretend to do it, are not ſuch perſons who are armed ſo much with the power of Chriſt, nor poſſeſſed with ſuch a due ſpirit of the Goſpel, which hath command over theſe infernal ſpirits. And this in the caſes pretended by the great jugglers and impoſtors of the Chriſtian world, the Popiſh Prieſts have been ſo notorious, that none of their party, of any great faith or credit, would ſtand to vouch them. And we have this impregnable argument againſt all ſuch impoſtures, that the matters which they by ſuch actions would give an evidence to, being ſo vaſtly different from, if not in ſome things diametrically oppoſite to, the firſt delivery and deſign of the Chriſtian faith, it is inconſiſtent with the way uſed

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used for the confirmation of Christian religion, in the first publishing of it, to attest the truth of such things by any real miracles; for so it would invalidate the great force of the evidences of the truth of Christianity, if the same argument should be used for the proving of that which, in the judgment of any impartial person, was not delivered, when the truth of the doctrine of Christ was confirmed by so many and uncontrolled miracles. But hereby we see what unconceivable prejudice hath been done to the true primitive doctrine of the Gospel, and what stumbling-blocks have been laid in the way of considerative persons, to keep them from embracing the truly Christian faith, by those who would be thought the infallible directors of men in it, by making use of the broad seal of heaven (set only to the truth of the Scriptures) to confirm their unwritten and superstitious ways of worship. For if I once see that which I looked on as an undoubted evidence of Divine power, brought to attest any thing directly contrary to Divine revelation, I must either conclude that God may contradict himself by sealing both parts of a contradiction, which is both blasphemous and impossible, or that that society of men which own such things is not at all tender of the honour of Christian doctrine, but seeks to set up an interest contrary to it, and matters not what disadvantage is done to the grounds of religion by such unworthy pretences: and which of these two is more rational and true, let every one's conscience judge. And therefore it is much the interest of the Christian world to have all such frauds and impostures discovered, which do so much disservice to the Christian faith, and are such secret fomenters of atheism and infidelity. But how far that promise of our Saviour, *that they which believe in his name shall cast out Devils and do many miracles*, may extend, even in these last ages of the world, to such generous and primitive-spirited Christians, who, out of a great and deep sense of the truth of Christi-

CHAP. IX.

Matt. xvi. 17.

BOOK II. anity, and tenderneſs to the ſouls of men, ſhould go among Heathens and Infidels to convert them only to Chriſt (and not to a ſecular intereſt, under pretence of an infallible head), is not here a place fully to enquire. I confeſs I cannot ſee any reaſon why God may not yet, for the conviction of Infidels, employ ſuch a power of miracles, although there be not ſuch neceſſity of it as there was in the firſt propagation of the Goſpel, there being ſome evidences of the power of Chriſtianity now, which were not ſo clear then (as the overthrowing the kingdom of Satan in the world; the prevailing of Chriſtianity, notwithſtanding force uſed againſt it; the recovery of it from amidſt all the corruptions which were mixed with it; the conſent of thoſe parties in the common foundations of Chriſtianity, which yet diſagree from each other with great bitterneſs of ſpirit); though, I ſay, it be not of that neceſſity now, when the Scriptures are conveyed to us in a certain uninterrupted manner, yet God may pleaſe, out of his abundant proviſion for the ſatisfaction of the minds of men, concerning the truth of Chriſtian doctrine, to employ good men to do ſomething which may manifeſt the power of Chriſt to be above the Devil's, whom they worſhip. And therefore I ſhould far ſooner believe the relation of the miracles of Xaverius and his brethren, employed in the converſion of Infidels, than Lipſius's *Virgo Hallenſis* and *Aſprecollis*, could it but be made evident to me that the deſign of thoſe perſons had more of Chriſtianity than Popery in it; that is, that they went more upon a deſign to bring the ſouls of the Infidels to heaven, than to enlarge the authority and juriſdiction of the Roman Church.

VIII. But whatever the truth of thoſe miracles, or the deſign of thoſe perſons were, we have certain and undoubted evidence of the truth of thoſe miracles, whereby Chriſtianity was firſt propagated, and the kingdom of Satan overthrown in the world; Chriſt thereby making it appear that his power was greater than

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than the Devil's, *who had poſſeſſion, becauſe he overcame him, took from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divided his ſpoils*; i. e. diſpoſſeſſed him of men's bodies, and his idolatrous temples, ſilenced his oracles, nonpluſt his magicians, and at laſt, when Chriſtianity had overcome by ſuffering, wreſted the worldly power and empire out of the Devil's hands, and employed it againſt himſelf. Neither may we think, becauſe ſince that time the Devil hath got ſome ground in the world again by the large ſpread of Mahometiſm, and the general corruptions in the Chriſtian world, that therefore the other was no argument of Divine power; becauſe the truth of Chriſtianity is not tied to any particular places; becauſe ſuch a falling away hath been foretold in the Scripture, and therefore the truth of them is proved by it; and becauſe God himſelf hath threatened, that thoſe who will not receive the truth in the love of it, ſhall be *given up to ſtrong deluſions*. Doth not this, then, inſtead of abating the ſtrength of the argument, confirm it more; and that nothing is fallen out in the Chriſtian world, but what was foretold by thoſe whom God employed in the converting of it? But we are neither without ſome fair hopes, even from that Divine revelation which was ſealed by uncontrolled evidence, that there may be yet a time to come, when Chriſt will recover his Churches to their priſtine purity and ſimplicity; but withal, I think we are not to meaſure the future felicity of the Church by outward ſplendour and greatneſs (which too many ſo ſtrongly fancy), but by a recovery of that true ſpirit of Chriſtianity which breathed in the firſt ages of the Church, whatever the outward condition of the Church may be: for if worldly greatneſs, and eaſe, and riches, were the firſt impairers of the purity of Chriſtian religion, it is hard to conceive how the reſtoring the Church of Chriſt to its true glory, can be by the advancing of that which gives ſo great

Luke xi. 21, 22.

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BOOK II. an occaſion to pride and ſenſuality, which are ſo contrary to the deſign of Chriſtian religion; unleſs we ſuppoſe men free from thoſe corruptions, which continual experience ſtill tells the world the rulers, as well as members of the Chriſtian ſociety, are ſubject to. Neither may that be wondered at, when ſuch unevenneſs of parts is now diſcovered in the great luminaries of the world, and the ſun himſelf is found to have his *maculæ*; as though the ſun had a purple fever, or, as Kircher expreſſeth it, *Ipſe Phœbus, qui rerum omnium in univerſo naturæ theatro aſpectabilium longè pulcherrimus omnium opinione eſt habitus, hoc ſeculo tandem fumoſa facie, ac infecto vultu maculis prodiit; diceres eum variolis laborare ſeneſcentem.* I ſpeak not this as though an outward flouriſhing condition of the Church were inconſiſtent with its purity; for then the way to refine it were to throw it into the flames of perſecution; but that the advancement of the flouriſhing condition of the Church is not merely by outward pomp and grandeur, and that the purity of the Church is not inconſiſtent with a ſtate of outward difficulties, which the experience of the primitive Church gives an irrefragable demonſtration of. Thus much may ſerve to ſhew the neceſſity of a power of miracles, conjoined with the Chriſtian doctrine, to manifeſt the truth of it, by overthrowing the kingdom of that great antichriſt, the Devil, who had uſurped ſo much tyranny over the world.

Kircher. Propyl. Agoniſt. ad Oedipum, cap. 2.

IX. The laſt reaſon why a power of miracles was ſo neceſſary for confirming the truth of the Goſpel, is, *becauſe the Goſpel was to be propagated over the world without any other rational evidence than was contained in the miracles wrought for the confirmation of it.* Now the admirable ſucceſs which this doctrine found in the world, conſidering all the circumſtances of it, do make it clear what certainty there was that the miracles which were wrought were true; and they were certain evidences that the doctrine atteſted by them was

was from God. Now this will appear from these two things;

1. *That no rational account can be given why the Apostles should undertake to publish such a doctrine, unless they had been undoubtedly certain that the doctrine was true, and they had sufficient evidence to persuade others to believe it.*

2. *That no satisfactory account can be given, considering the nature of the doctrine of Christ, and the manner of its propagation, why it should meet with so great acceptance in the world, had there not been such convincing evidence as might fully perfuaae men of the truth of it.*

I begin with the first, *from the publishers of this doctrine in the world.* All that I here require, by way of a postulatum or supposition, are only these two things; which no man right in his wits I suppose will deny. 1. *That men are so far rational agents, that they will not set upon any work of moment and difficulty, without sufficient grounds inducing them to it*; and by so much the greater the work is, the more sure and stedfast had the grounds need to be which they proceed upon. 2. *That the Apostles, or first publishers of the Christian doctrine, were not men distracted, or bereft of their wits, but acted by principles of common sense, reason, and understanding, as other men in the world do*; which if any one should be so far beside his wits as to question, if he have but patience and understanding enough to read and consider those admirable writings of theirs, which are conveyed to us by as certain uninterrupted a tradition as any thing in the world hath been, by that time he will see cause to alter his judgment, and to say that *they are not mad, but speak the words of the greatest truth and soberness.* These things supposed, I now proceed to the proving of the thing in hand; which will be done by these three things: First, *That the Apostles could not but know how hazardous an employment the preaching of the Gospel would be to them.* Secondly, *That no motive can be conceived*

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conceived ſufficient for them to undertake ſuch an employment, but the infallible truth of the doctrine which they preached. Thirdly, *That the greateſt aſſurance they had themſelves of the truth of their doctrine, was by being eye-witneſſes of the miracles of Chriſt.*

Firſt, *That the Apoſtles could not but underſtand the hazard of their employment; notwithſtanding which they cheerfully undertook it.* That men armed with no external power, nor cried up for their wit and learning, and carrying a doctrine with them ſo contrary to the general inclinations of the world, having nothing in it to recommend it to mankind but the truth of it, ſhould go about to perſuade the world to part with the religion they owned, and was ſettled by their laws, and to embrace ſuch a religion as called them off from all the things they loved in this world, and to prepare themſelves, by mortification and ſelf-denial, for another world, is a thing to human reaſon incredible, unleſs we ſuppoſe them acted by a higher ſpirit than mankind is ordinarily acted by. For what is there ſo deſirable in continual reproaches and contumelies? What delight is there in racks and priſons? What agreeableneſs in flames and martyrdoms, to make men undergo ſome, nay all of theſe, rather than diſown that doctrine which they came to publiſh? Yet theſe did the Apoſtles cheerfully undergo, in order to the converſion of the world to the truth of that doctrine which they delivered to it; and not only ſo, but though they did foreſee them, they were not diſcouraged from this undertaking by it. I confeſs, when men are upon hopes of profit and intereſt in the world, engaged upon a deſign which they promiſe themſelves impunity in, having power on their ſide, though afterwards things ſhould fall out contrary to their expectation, ſuch perſons may die in ſuch a cauſe, becauſe they muſt, and ſome may carry it out with more reſolution, partly through an innate fortitude of ſpirit, heightened with the advantages of religion,

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ligion, or an enthuſiaſtic temper. But it is hard to conceive that ſuch perſons would have undertaken ſo hazardous an employment, if before-hand they had foreſeen what they muſt have undergone for it. But now the Apoſtles did foreknow that bonds and impriſonment, nay death itſelf, muſt be undergone in a violent manner, for the ſake of the doctrine which they preached; yet notwithſtanding all this, they go boldly and with reſolution on with their work, and give not over becauſe of any hardſhips and perſecutions they met withal. One of the chiefeſt of them, St. Peter, and as forward as any in preaching the Goſpel, had the very manner of his death foretold him by Chriſt himſelf, before his aſcenſion; yet ſoon after we find him preaching Chriſt in the midſt of thoſe who had crucified him, and telling them to their faces the greatneſs of their ſin in it, and appealing to the miracles which Chriſt had done among them, and *bidding them repent, and believe in him whom they had crucified, if ever they would be ſaved.* And this he did, not only among the people who gave their conſent to the crucifying of Chriſt, but ſoon after being convented, together with John, before the court of Sanhedrin (probably the very ſame which not long before had ſentenced Chriſt to death) for a miracle wrought by them, with what incredible boldneſs doth he to their faces tell them of their murdering of Chriſt; and withal, that there was no other way to ſalvation but by him whom they had crucified! *Be it known unto you all* (ſaith Peter to the Sanhedrin), *and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt, whom ye have crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* What an heroic freedom of ſpirit appears in theſe words! What magnanimity and courage was there now in that perſon, who durſt in the face of this court tell them of their

John xxi. 19.

Acts ii. 22, 23, 38. Acts iii. 13, 14, 15, 19. Acts iv. 5.

Acts iv. 10, 12.

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their murder, and that there was no ſalvation but by him whom they had crucified! Well might they wonder at the boldneſs of the men, who feared not the ſame death which they had ſo lately brought their Lord and Maſter to.

X.

Neither was this ſingly the caſe of Peter and John, but all the reſt of the Apoſtles undertook their work with the ſame reſolution and preparation of ſpirit, to undergo the greateſt hardſhip in the world for the ſake of the truths they preached; and accordingly, as far as eccleſiaſtical hiſtory can aſcertain us of it, they did all but John (and that to make good the prediction of Chriſt) ſuffer violent deaths by the hands of thoſe who perſecuted them merely for their doctrine. And which is moſt obſervable, when Chriſt deſigned them firſt of all for this work, he told them before-hand of reproaches, perſecutions, all manner of hardſhips, nay of death itſelf, which they muſt undergo for his ſake. All that he gave them by way of encouragement, was, that they could only *kill the body*, and not the *ſoul*, and therefore *that they ſhould fear him only who could deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell:* all the ſupport they had was an expectation in another world, and that animated them to go through all the hardſhips of this. Where do we ever read of any ſuch boldneſs and courage, in the moſt knowing philoſophers of the Heathens? With what faintneſs and miſgiving of mind doth Socrates ſpeak, in his famous diſcourſe ſuppoſed to be made by him before his death? How uncertainly doth he ſpeak of a ſtate of immortality? And yet in all probability Plato ſet it forth with all advantages imaginable. Where do we find that ever any of the great friends of Socrates, who were preſent at his death, as Phædo, Cebes, Crito, and Simmias, durſt enter the Areopagus, and condemn them there for the murder of Socrates? though this would be far ſhort of what the Apoſtles did. Why were they not ſo charitable as to inform the world better, of thoſe grand truths of the

John xxi. 22.

Matt. x. 17, 18, 21, 22, 28.

Plato in Phæd.

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the being of God and immortality of ſouls, if at leaſt they were fully convinced of them themſelves? Why did not Plato at leaſt ſpeak out, and tell the world the truth, and not diſguiſe his diſcourſes under feigned names, the better to avoid accuſation and the fate of Socrates? How doth he mince his excellent matter, and plays as it were at bo-peep with his readers, ſometimes appearing, and then pulling in his horns again? It may not be an improbable conjecture, that the death of Socrates was the foundation of the academy: I mean of that cautelous doctrine of withholding aſſent, and being both *pro* and *con*, ſometimes of this ſide, and ſometimes of that; for Socrates's death hath made all his friends very fearful of being too dogmatical; and Plato himſelf had too much riches, and withal too much of a courtier in him, to hazard the dear priſon of his ſoul, viz. his body, merely for an *æthereal vehicle*. He had rather let his ſoul flutter up and down in *terreſtrial matter*, or the cage it was pent up in, than hazard too violent an opening of it by the hands of the Areopagus. And the great Roman orator, among the reſt of Plato's ſentiments, had learnt this too; for although in his diſcourſes he hath many times ſufficiently laid open the folly of the Heathen worſhip and theology, yet he knows how to bring himſelf off ſafe enough with the people; and will be ſure to be dogmatical only in this, *that nothing is to be innovated in the religion of a commonwealth*, and that the *cuſtoms of our anceſtors are inviolably to be obſerved*. Which principles, had they been true as they were ſafe for the perſons who ſpake them, the Chriſtian religion had never gained any entertainment in the world; for wherever it came, it met with this potent prejudice, that it was looked on as an innovation, and therefore was ſhrewdly ſuſpected by the governors of commonwealths, and the preachers of it puniſhed as factious and ſeditious perſons; which was all the pretext the wiſe politicians of the world had for their cruel and inhuman

CHAP. IX.

BOOK II. inhuman perſecutions of ſuch multitudes of peaceable and innocent Chriſtians. Now when theſe things were foretold by the Apoſtles themſelves, before their going abroad, ſo plainly, that with the ſame faith they did believe the doctrine they preached to be true, they muſt believe that all theſe things ſhould come to paſs, what courage and magnanimity of ſpirit was it in them thus to encounter dangers, and as it were court the flames? Nay, and before the time was come that they muſt die, to ſeal the truth of their doctrine, their whole life was a continual peregrination, wherein they were as ſo many Jobs in pilgrimage, encountered with perils and dangers on every ſide; of which, one of the moſt painful and ſucceſsful, St. Paul, hath given in ſuch a large inventory of his perils, that the very reading of them were enough to undo a poor Epicurean philoſopher, and at once to ſpoil him of the two pillars of his happineſs; the quietneſs of his mind and eaſe of his body. Thus we ſee what a hazardous employment that was which the Apoſtles went upon, and that it was ſuch as they very well underſtood the difficulty of before they ſet upon it.

2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, 8, 9.

XI. Secondly, *We cannot find out any rational motive, which could carry them through ſo hazardous an employment, but the full convictions of their minds of the undoubted truth and certainty of the doctrine which they delivered.* We find before that no vulgar motives in the world could carry them upon that deſign which they went upon. Could they be led by ambition and vain-glory, who met with ſuch reproaches wherever they went; and not only perſecutions of the tongue, but the ſharper ones of the hands too? We never read of any but the primitive Chriſtians, who were ambitious of being martyrs, and thought long till they were in the flames; which made Arrius Antonius, being pro-conſul of Aſia when Chriſtians in multitudes beſet his tribunal, and thronged in to be condemned, ſay to them, ὦ δειλοὶ, εἰ θέλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, χρημνὸς

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κρημνὸς ἢ βρόχους ἔχετε, *O miſerable people, had not ye ways enough to end your lives at home, but ye muſt crowd for an execution!* This was a higher ambition by far than any of thoſe *mancipia gloriæ*, thoſe chamæleons that lived on the breath of applauſe, the Heathen philoſophers, ever reached to, who were, as Tertullian expreſſeth it, *Homines gloriæ & eloquentiæ ſolius libidinoſi, unſatiable thirſters after the honour and eloquence of the world*; but the ſpirit of a Chriſtian did ſoar too high to quarry on ſo mean a prey. When the more ſober Heathens had taken a ſtricter notice of the carriages and lives of the preachers of the Goſpel and all their genuine followers, they, inſtead of the common and rude name of Impoſtors, gave them a more civil title of Philoſophers, and looked upon their doctrine as a ſublimer kind of philoſophy, *Non utique divinum negotium exiſtimant, ſed magis philoſophiæ genus*, as Tertullian tells us, becauſe the philoſophers pretended ſo much to moral virtues, which they ſaw the Chriſtians ſo excellent in; but as Tertullian there replies, *Nomen hoc philoſophorum Dæmonia non fugat, the Devil was never afraid of a philoſopher's beard*, nor were diſeaſes cured by the touch of a philoſophic pallium. There was ſomething more divine in Chriſtians than in the grave philoſophers, and that not only in reference to their lives, and the Divine power which was ſeen in them, but in reference to the truth and certainty of their doctrine; it being a true character given of both, by that ſame excellent writer in behalf of the Chriſtians of his time: *Veritatem philoſophi quidem affectant, poſſident autem Chriſtiani; what the philoſophers deſired only, the Chriſtians enjoy*; which was *Truth*: and as he elſewhere more fully ſpeaks, *Mimice philoſophi affectant veritatem, & affectando corrumpunt, ut qui gloriam captant; Chriſtiani eam neceſſario appetunt, & integrè præſtant, ut qui ſaluti ſuæ curant. Truth is the philoſopher's miſtreſs, which by courting he vitiates and corrupts, looking at nothing but his own glory: but Truth is the Chriſtian's matron, whoſe directions*

CHAP. IX.

Tertull. ad Scapul. c. 5. Ed. Pamel.

Idem Apolog. c. 47.

Ibid. c. 46.

Idem ad Nationes, l. i. c. 4.

Idem Apol. c. 46.

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BOOK II. *directions he obſerves and follows, becauſe he regards no glory but that to come.* And to let them further ſee what a difference there was between a Chriſtian and a philoſopher, he concludes that diſcourſe with theſe words: *Quid adeo ſimile philoſophus & Chriſtianus? Græciæ diſcipulus & cœli? Famæ negotiator & vitæ? Verborum & factorum operator? Rerum ædificator & deſtructor? Amicus & inimicus erroris? Veritatis interpolator & integrator? Furator ejus & cuſtos? As much diſtance* (ſaith he) *as there is between Greece and heaven, between applauſe and eternal glory, between words and things, between building and deſtroying, between truth and error, between a plagiary and corrupter of truth, and a preſerver and advancer of it; ſo much is there between a philoſopher and a Chriſtian.* The Heathens might ſuſpect indeed ſome kind of affinity between the firſt preachers of the Goſpel and the ancient Sophiſts of Greece, becauſe of their frequent going from place to place, and pretending a kind of enthuſiaſm as they did: but as much difference as there is between a knight-errant and Hercules, between a mountebank and Hippocrates, that and much greater there is between a Greek Sophiſt and an Apoſtle. Socrates, in Plato's Euthydemus, hath excellently diſcovered the vanity and futility of thoſe perſons, under the perſons of Euthydemus and Dionyſodorus; and ſo likewiſe in his Protagoras. Their intent was only like the *retiaries*, in the Roman ſpectacles, to catch their adverſaries in a net, to entangle them with ſome captious queſtion or other. But how vaſtly different from this was the deſign of the Apoſtles, who abhorred thoſe endleſs contentions which then were in the Heathen world, and came to ſhew them that Truth which was revealed, with an intent of making them better men!

XII. We ſee the Apoſtles were not carried forth by any mean and vulgar motives, neither did they drive on any private ends of their own; all that they minded was the promoting of the doctrine which they preached.

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preached. Nay, they accounted no hazards comparable with the advantage which the world enjoyed through the propagation of the Chriſtian religion. This ſhewed a truly noble and generous ſpirit in them, which would not be hindered from doing the world good, though they found ſo bad entertainment from it; yea, they rejoiced in their greateſt ſufferings which they underwent in ſo good a cauſe; wherein thoſe primitive Chriſtians, who were the genuine followers of the Apoſtles, did ſo far imitate them, that, *etiam damnati gratias agunt*, they gave the *judges thanks* that they thought them worthy to loſe their lives in a cauſe which they had reaſon to triumph in, though they died for it: and when any of them were apprehended, they diſcovered ſo little fear of puniſhment, *Ut unum ſolummodo quod non ante fuerint pœniteret, that nothing troubled them ſo much as that they had been Chriſtians no ſooner*, as one of their number ſpeaks. And when the Heathens uſually ſcoffed at them, and called them *Sarmentitii* and *Semaxii*, becauſe they were burned upon the croſs, one of them, in the name of the reſt, anſwers, *Hic eſt habitus victoriæ noſtræ, hæc palmata veſtis, tali curru triumphamus*; the croſs was only their triumphant chariot, which carried them ſooner to heaven. Now this courage and reſolution of ſpirit, which was ſeen in the firſt planters of Chriſtianity in the world, made all ſerious and inquiſitive perſons look more narrowly into thoſe things, which made men ſlight ſo much the common bugbears of human nature, ſufferings, and death. *Quis enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur, ad requirendum quid intus in re ſit? Quis non ubi requiſivit, accedit? Ubi acceſſit, pati exoptat?* Theſe ſufferings made men enquire; this enquiry made them believe; that belief made them as willing to ſuffer themſelves, as they had ſeen others do it before them. Thus it appeared to be true in them, *Exquiſitior quæque crudelitas, illecebra magis eſt ſectæ; plures efficimur quoties metimur à vobis; ſemen eſt ſanguis Chriſtianorum; The cru-*

CHAP. IX.

Tertullian. Apol. c. 46.

Min. Felix.

Tertullian. Apol. c. 50.

Id. ib.

Id. ib.

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elty of their enemies did but increaſe their number; the harveſt of their pretended juſtice was but the ſeed-time of Chriſtianity; and no ſeed was ſo fruitful as that which was ſteeped in the blood of martyrs. Thence Juſtin Martyr ingenuouſly ſaith of himſelf, that while he was a Platonic philoſopher, he derided and ſcoffed at the Chriſtians; but when he conſidered their great courage and conſtancy in dying for their profeſſion, he could not think thoſe could poſſibly be men wicked and voluptuous, who, when offers of life were made them, would rather chooſe death than deny Chriſt; by which he found plainly that there was a higher ſpirit in Chriſtianity than could be obtained by the ſublime notions and ſpeculations of Plato, and that a poor ignorant Chriſtian would do and ſuffer more for the ſake of Chriſt, than any of the academy in defence of their maſter Plato. Now ſince all men naturally abhor ſufferings, what is it which ſhould ſo powerfully alter the nature and diſpoſition of Chriſtians above all other perſons, that they alone ſhould ſeem in that to have forgot humanity, that not only with patience, but with joy they endured torments and abode the flames? What! were they all poſſeſſed with a far more than ſtoical apathy, that no ſenſe of pain could work at all upon them? Or were they all beſotted and infatuated perſons, that did not know what it was they underwent? It is true, ſome of the more blind and wilful Heathens derided them as ſuch: but who were the more infatuated, let any ſober perſon judge; they who ſlighted and rejected a doctrine of ſo great concernment, which came atteſted with ſo much reſolution and courage in the profeſſors of it, or they who were ſo far perſuaded of the truth of it, that they would rather die than deny it? *Dicimus & palam dicimus, & vobis torquentibus laceṛati & cruenti vociferamur: Deum colimus per Chriſtum.* They were not aſhamed to believe in the blood of Chriſt, even when their own blood ran down before their eyes, and confeſs Chriſt with

Tertullian. Apol. c. 21.

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with their mouths, when their bodies were upon the rack. Certainly then there were ſome very powerful and convincing arguments, which buoyed up the ſpirits of true Chriſtians in that deluge of ſufferings which they were to ſwim through: it muſt be a ſtrong and well-grounded faith, which would hold out under ſo great trials; and they could not be to ſeek for the moſt perſuaſive motives to faith, who were ſo ready to give an account to others of the hope that was in them, and to perſuade all other perſons to the embracing of it. With what face and confidence otherwiſe could they perſuade men to embrace a doctrine ſo dangerous as that was, had there not been motives ſufficient to bear up againſt the weight of ſufferings, and arguments perſuaſive to convince them of the undoubted certainty of that doctrine which they encouraged them to believe? CHAP. IX.

XIII. Now that which appears to have been the main ground of ſatisfaction to the primitive Chriſtians as to the truth and certainty of the doctrine of Chriſt, was this: That the doctrine of the Goſpel was at firſt delivered to the world by thoſe perſons who were themſelves eye-witneſſes of all the miracles which our Saviour wrought, in confirmation of the truth of what he ſpake. They were ſuch perſons who had been themſelves preſent, not only to hear moſt of our Saviour's admirable diſcourſes when he was in the world, but to ſee all thoſe glorious things which were done by him, to make it appear that he was immediately ſent from God. Let us now appeal to our own faculties, and examine a little what rational evidence could poſſibly be deſired, that the doctrine of the Goſpel was true, which God did not afford to the world? What could the perſons, who were the auditors of our Saviour, deſire more as an evidence that he came from God, than his doing ſuch things, which were certainly above any created power, either human or diabolical, and therefore muſt needs be Divine? What could other perſons

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desire more, who were not present at the doing of these miracles, but that the report of them should be conveyed to them in an undoubted manner, by those persons who were eye-witnesses of them, and made it appear to the world they were far from any intention of deceiving it? Now this makes the Apostles themselves, in their own writings (though they were divinely inspired), appeal to the rational evidence of the truth of the things, in that they were delivered by them who were eye-witnesses of them. There St.

2 Pet. i. 16. Peter speaks thus to the dispersed Jews: Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος. *For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.* The power and coming of Christ which the Apostle speaks of, was not, as some improbably conceive, either his general coming to judgment upon the world, or his particular coming upon the nation of the Jews; but by an *hendyades*, by his power and coming is meant his powerful appearance in the world, whereby he mightily discovered himself to be the Son of God. Now this, saith the Apostle, was no σεσοφισμένος μύθος, not like the Heathen mythology concerning the παρουσίαι and ἐπιφανείαι, of their Gods among them (which were so frequently believed among them, that Dionysius Halicarnassæus condemns the Epicureans, because they did deride τὰς ἐπιφανείας τῶν θεῶν, *the appearances of their Gods in the world)*. Now, saith the Apostle, assure yourselves this is no such appearance of a God on earth as that among the Heathens was; for, saith he, we ourselves, who declare these things, were ἐπόπται, we fully understood this μέγα μυστήριον, *this great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh*; for we saw his μεγαλειότης, *that great majesty which attended him in all which he spake or did*; we saw all

Dionys. Halic. l. ii. p. 123. Ed. Oxon.

Acts ii. 11. those μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the great things of God*, which were

were manifeſt in him; all thoſe miraculous operations which were wrought by him. Therefore, as this was a great confirmation of the faith of the Apoſtles themſelves, that they ſaw all theſe things, ſo we ſee it was of great concernment to the world, in order to their belief that the Goſpel was no cunningly-deviſed fable, in that it was delivered by ſuch who were ἐπόπται, *eye-witneſſes* of what they declared. To the ſame purpoſe St. John ſpeaks, *ad conciliandam fidem*, to make it appear how true what they delivered was, in the entrance of his Epiſtle: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life (for the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us), that which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you.* We ſee what great force and weight the Apoſtle lays upon this, that they delivered nothing but what they had ſeen and heard; as they heard the doctrine of Chriſt, ſo they ſaw the miracles which he wrought in confirmation of it. St. Luke likewiſe, in the beginning of his Goſpel, declares that he intended to write nothing but *what he had perfect underſtanding of from ſuch perſons who had been* αὐτόπται, *eye-witneſſes, and inſtruments themſelves in part of what was written*; for that is meant by ὑπηρέται τοῦ λόγου: *and thoſe things which were written*, he ſaith, were πεπληροφορημένα ἐν ἡμῖν πράγματα, *things which are abundantly proved to be true*; for being matters of fact, there could be no ſtronger proof of them than by ſuch who were eye-witneſſes of what they ſpake. And this we find the Apoſtles themſelves very cautious about, in the choice of a new Apoſtle in the room of Judas. *Wherefore of theſe men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day that he was taken from us, muſt one be ordained to be*

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1 John i. 1, 2, 3.

Luke i. 1, 2, 3.

Acts i. 21, 22.

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a witneſs of his reſurrection; for, becauſe *Chriſt was mightily declared to be the Son of God by his reſurrection from the dead* (as that which was the great ſeal of our Saviour's being the Son of God), therefore we find the Apoſtles ſo frequently atteſting the truth of the reſurrection of Chriſt, and that themſelves were eye-
Acts ii. 32. witneſſes of it. *This Jeſus*, ſaith Peter, *hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes.* And again,
Cap. iii. 15. *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raiſed up from the dead, whereof we are witneſſes:* and both Pe-
Cap. iv. 20. ter and John to the Sanhedrin; *For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard.* And
Cap. v. 32. the whole college of Apoſtles afterwards, *And we are his witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* In which words they give them that twofold rational evidence, which did manifeſt the undoubted truth of what they ſpake; for they delivered nothing but what themſelves were witneſſes of, and withal was declared to be true by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the miracles which were wrought by and upon believers. Afterwards we read the ſum of the Apoſtles' preaching, and the manner uſed by them to perſuade men of the truth of it, in the words of Peter to Cornelius
Cap. x. 39, 40, 41, 42. and his company, *How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil, for God was with him: and we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jeruſalem, whom they ſlew and hanged on a tree: him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God; even to us who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* By all which we ſee what care God was pleaſed to take for the ſatisfaction of the world in point of rational evidence, as to the truth of the matters which were diſcovered concerning

concerning our Saviour Chriſt, becauſe he made choice of ſuch perſons to be the preachers and writers of theſe things, who were the beſt able to ſatisfy the world about them, viz. ſuch as had been eye-witneſſes of them. CHAP. IX.

Now, in order to the making it more fully evident what ſtrength there was in this teſtimony given by the Apoſtles to the miracles of Chriſt, we ſhall more fully manifeſt the rational evidence which attended it, in theſe following propoſitions. XIV.

Where the truth of a doctrine depends upon a matter of fact, the truth of the doctrine is ſufficiently manifeſted, if the matter of fact be evidently proved in the higheſt way it is capable of. Thus it is in reference to the doctrine of Chriſt; for the truth of that is ſo interwoven with the truth of the ſtory of Chriſt, that if the relations concerning Chriſt be true, his doctrine muſt needs be divine and infallible. For if it be undoubtedly true, that there was ſuch a perſon as Chriſt born at Bethlehem, who did ſo many miracles, and at laſt ſuffered the death of the croſs, and after he had lain three days in the grave, *roſe again* from the dead, what reaſon imaginable can I have to queſtion but that the teſtimony of this perſon was certainly divine, and conſequently whatever he preached to the world was moſt certain and undoubted truth? So that if we have clear evidence as to the truth of theſe paſſages concerning our Saviour, we muſt likewiſe believe his doctrine, which came atteſted with ſuch pregnant evidences of a Divine commiſſion, which he had from God to the world. No prince can think he hath any reaſon to refuſe audience to an ambaſſador, when he finds his credentials ſuch as he may rely upon, although himſelf doth not ſee the ſealing of them; much leſs reaſon have we to queſtion the truth of the doctrine of the Goſpel, if we have ſufficient evidence of the truth of the matters of fact concerning Chriſt, in ſuch a way as thoſe things are capable of being proved. Prop. 1.

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Prop. 2.

The greateſt evidence which can be given to a matter of fact, is the atteſting of it by thoſe perſons who were eye-witneſſes of it. This is the foundation whereon the firmeſt aſſent is built, as to any matter of fact; for although we conceive we have reaſon to ſuſpect the truth of a ſtory, as long as it is conveyed only in a general way, by an uncertain fame and tradition, yet when it comes to be atteſted by a ſufficient number of credible perſons, who profeſs themſelves the eye-witneſſes of it, it is accounted an unreaſonable thing to diſtruſt any longer the truth of it; eſpecially in theſe two caſes: 1. *When the matter they bear witneſs to is a thing which they might eaſily and clearly perceive.* 2. *When many witneſſes exactly agree in the ſame teſtimony.*

1. *When the matter itſelf is of that nature that it may be fully perceived by thoſe who ſaw it,* i. e. if it be a common object of ſenſe: and thus it certainly was as to the perſon and actions of Jeſus Chriſt. For he was of the ſame nature with mankind; and they had as great evidence that they converſed with Jeſus Chriſt in the fleſh, as we can have that we converſe one with another. The miracles of Chriſt were real and viſible miracles; they could be no illuſions of ſenſes, nor deceits of their eyes. The man who was born blind, and cured by our Saviour, was known to have been born blind through all the country; and his cure was after as public as his blindneſs before, and acknowledged by the greateſt enemies of Chriſt at the time of its being done. When Chriſt raiſed up the dead man at Naim, it was before much people, and ſuch perſons in probability who were many of them preſent at his death. But leſt there might be any ſuſpicion as to him that he was not really dead, the caſe is plain and beyond all diſpute in Lazarus, who had been, to the knowledge of all perſons thereabouts, dead four days. Here could be no deceit at all when the ſtone was rolled away, and Lazarus came forth in the preſence of them all. And

John ix. 26. Luke vii. 12.

John xi. 39.

yet

yet further, the death and paſſion of our Saviour was a plain object of ſenſe, done in preſence of his greateſt adverſaries. The ſoldiers themſelves were ſufficient witneſſes of his being really dead when they came to break his bones, and ſpared him becauſe they ſaw he was dead already. At his reſurrection the ſtone was rolled away from the ſepulchre, and no body found therein, although the ſepulchre was guarded by ſoldiers, and the Diſciples of Chriſt all ſo fearful, that they were diſperſed up and down in ſeveral places. And that it was the ſame real body which he roſe withal, and no *aëreal vehicle*, appears by Thomas's ſcrupuloſity and unbelief, *who would not believe, unleſs he might put his hands into the hole of his ſide, and ſee in his hands the print of the nails.* Now our Saviour condeſcending ſo far as to ſatisfy the incredulity of St. Thomas, hath made it thereby evident, that the body which our Saviour roſe from the grave with, was the ſame individual body which before was crucified and buried in the ſepulchre. And we find all the Apoſtles together, upon our Saviour's appearance to them after his reſurrection, ſo far from being credulous in embracing a phantaſm inſtead of Chriſt, that they ſuſpected that it was either a mere phantaſm, or an evil ſpirit, which appeared among them; upon which it is ſaid, *They were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed they had ſeen a ſpirit*; which our Saviour could not beat them off from, but by appealing to the judgment of their ſenſes; *Handle me and ſee*; *for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have*; and afterwards, more fully to convince them, *he did eat in the midſt of them.* Now the more ſuſpicious and incredulous the Apoſtles themſelves at firſt were, the greater evidence is it how far they were from any deſign of abuſing the world in what they after preached unto it, and what ſtrong conviction there was in the thing itſelf, which was able to ſatisfy ſuch ſcrupulous and ſuſpicious perſons.

John xx. 25, 27.

Luke xxiv. 37.

Ver. 39.

Ver. 43.

2. *When*

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2. *When many witneſſes concur in the ſame teſtimony.* Nothing can diſparage more the truth of a teſtimony, than the counter-witneſs of ſuch who were preſent at the ſame actions; but when all the witneſſes fully agree not only in the ſubſtance, but in all material circumſtances of the ſtory, what ground or reaſon can there be to ſuſpect a forgery or deſign in it, eſpecially when the perſons cannot by any fears or threatenings be brought to vary from each other in it? Thus it is in our preſent caſe: we find no real diſſent at all mentioned either as to the birth, miracles, life, death, or reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. All the witneſſes atteſt the ſame things, though writing in different places, and upon different occaſions. No alteration in any circumſtance of the ſtory, out of any deſign of pleaſing or gratifying any perſons by it. Moſt of our Saviour's miracles, not only his Apoſtles, but the people and his very enemies were witneſſes of; whoſe poſterity to this day dare not deny the truth of ſuch ſtrange works which were wrought by him. And for his reſurrection, it would be very ſtrange that five hundred perſons ſhould all agree in the ſame thing, and that no torments or death could bring any of them to deny the truth of it, had there not been the greateſt certainty in it.

XV. Prop. 3. *There can be no reaſon to ſuſpect ſuch a teſtimony, which is given by eye-witneſſes, but either from queſtioning their knowledge of the things they ſpake of, or their fidelity in reporting them.* Now there is not the leaſt ground to doubt either of theſe, in reference to thoſe perſons who gave teſtimony to the world concerning the perſon and actions of our bleſſed Saviour.

For, firſt, *they were ſuch as were intimately converſant both with the perſon and actions of Jeſus Chriſt*; whom he had choſen and trained up for that very end, that they might be ſufficiently qualified to acquaint the world with the truth of things concerning himſelf after his reſurrection from the dead. And accordingly

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accordingly they followed him up and down wherefoever he went; they were with him in his ſolitudes and retirements, and had thereby occaſion to obſerve all his actions, and to take notice of the unſpotted innocency of his life. Some of his Diſciples were with him in his transfiguration; others in his agony and bloody ſweat: they heard the expreſſions which came from his mouth; in all which he diſcovered a wonderful ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and a great readineſs of mind to ſuffer for the good of the world. Now therefore the firſt thing cannot at all be queſtioned; their means of knowing the truth of what they ſpake. CHAP. IX.

Neither, ſecondly, is there any *reaſon to ſuſpect their fidelity in reporting what they knew:* For, 1. *The truth of this doctrine wrought ſo far upon them, that they parted with all their worldly ſubſiſtence for the ſake of it.* Although their riches were not great, yet their way of ſubſiſtence in the world was neceſſary. They left their houſes, their wives and children, and all for Chriſt; and that not to gain any higher preferments in this world (which had they done, it would have rendered their deſign ſuſpicious to the curious and inquiſitive world), but they let go at leaſt a quiet and eaſy life, for one moſt troubleſome and dangerous. So that it is not how much they parted withal, but how freely they did it, and with what cheerfulneſs they underwent diſgraces, perſecutions, nay death itſelf, for the ſake of the Goſpel. Now can it be imagined that ever men were ſo prodigal of their eaſe and lives, as to throw both of them away upon a thing which themſelves were not fully aſſured of the truth of? It had been the higheſt folly imaginable to have deceived themſelves in a thing of ſo great moment to them, as the truth of that doctrine which they preached was; becauſe all their hopes and happineſs depended upon the truth of that doctrine which they preached. And as Tertullian obſerves, *Non fas eſt ulli de ſua religione mentiri*; for, ſaith he, *He that ſays he worſhips any thing beſides what*

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BOOK II. *what he doth, he denies what he doth worſhip, and transfers his worſhip upon another; and thereby doth not worſhip that which he thus denies.* Beſides, what probability is there men ſhould lie for the ſake of that religion, which tells them that thoſe which do ſo will not receive the reward which is promiſed to thoſe who cordially adhere unto it? Nay, they declared themſelves to be the moſt miſerable of all perſons, 1 Cor. xv. 19. *if their hopes were only in this preſent life.* Can we now think that any who had the common reaſon of men, would part with all the contentments of this world, and expoſe themſelves to continual hazards, and at laſt undergo death itſelf, for the ſake of ſomething which was merely the fiction of their own brains? What ſhould make them ſo ſedulous and induſtrious in preaching ſuch things, that they could 1 Cor. ix. 16. *ſay neceſſity was laid upon them, yea, woe was unto them if they preached not the Goſpel,* when yet they ſaw ſo many woes attending them in the preaching of it, had there not been ſome more powerful attractive in the beauty and excellency of the doctrine which they preached, than any could be in the eaſe and tranquillity of this preſent world? Thus we ſee the fidelity of the Apoſtles manifeſted in ſuch a way, as no other witneſſes were ever yet willing to hazard theirs.

Origen cont. Celſum, l. iii. p. 127. And therefore Origen deſervedly condemns Celſus of a ridiculous impertinency, when he would parallel the relations of Herodotus and Pindarus, concerning Ariſteus Proconneſius, with thoſe of the Apoſtles concerning Chriſt; for, ſaith he, *Did either of theſe two venture their lives upon the truth of what they writ concerning him, as the Apoſtles did to atteſt the truth of what they preached concerning our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt?*

XVI. 2. The fidelity of the Apoſtles is evident in their *manner of reporting the things which they deliver.* For if ever there may be any thing gathered from the manner of expreſſion, or the τὸ ἦθος τοῦ λόγου, concerning the particular temper and diſpoſition of the perſon

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perſon from whom it comes, we may certainly read the greateſt fidelity in the Apoſtles, from the peculiar manner of their expreſſing themſelves to the world. Which they do,

1. *With the greateſt impartiality*; not declaring only what was glorious and admirable to the world, but what they knew would be accounted fooliſhneſs by it. They who had ſought only to have been admired for the rare diſcoveries which they brought to the world, would be ſure to conceal any thing which might be accounted ridiculous; but the Apoſtles fixed themſelves moſt on what was moſt contemptible in the eyes of the world, and what they were moſt mocked and derided for, that they delighted moſt in the preaching of, which was the Croſs of Chriſt. Paul was ſo much in love with this, which was a ſtumbling-block to the Jews, and fooliſhneſs to the Greeks, *that he valued the knowledge of nothing elſe in compariſon of the knowledge of Chriſt, and him crucified.* Nay, he elſewhere ſaith, *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of Chriſt.* What now ſhould be the reaſon that they ſhould rejoice in that moſt which was moſt deſpicable to the world, had not they ſeen far greater truth and excellency in it, than in the moſt ſublime ſpeculations concerning God, or the ſouls of men, in the ſchool of Plato, or any other Heathen philoſophers? That all men ſhould be bound, in order to their ſalvation, to believe in one who was crucified at Jeruſalem, was a ſtrange doctrine to the unbelieving world: but if the Apoſtles had but endeavoured to have ſuited their doctrine to the ſchool of Plato, what rare perſons might they have been accounted among the Heathen philoſophers! Had they only in general terms diſcourſed of the benignity of the Divine nature, and the manifeſtations of Divine goodneſs in the world, and that in order to the bringing of the ſouls of men to a nearer participation of the Divine nature, the perfect idea of true goodneſs, and the expreſs

1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8.

Gal. vi. 14.

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expreſs image of the perſon of God, and the reſplendency of his glory had veiled himſelf in human nature, and had every where ſcattered ſuch beams of light and goodneſs as warmed and invigorated the frozen ſpirits of men with higher ſentiments of God and themſelves, and raiſed them up above the feculency of this terreſtrial matter to breathe in a freſher air, and converſe with more noble objects, and by degrees to fit the ſouls of men for thoſe more pure illapſes of real goodneſs, which might always ſatisfy the ſoul's deſires, and yet always keep them up till the ſoul ſhould be ſunning itſelf to all eternity under the immediate beams of light and love: and that after this incarnate Deity had ſpread abroad the wings of his love for awhile upon this lower world, till by his gentle heat and incubation he had quickened the more pliable world to ſome degree of a Divine life, he then retreated himſelf back again into the ſuperior world, and put off that veil by which he made himſelf known to thoſe who are here confined to the priſons of their bodies. Thus, I ſay, had the Apoſtles minded applauſe among the admired philoſophers of the Heathens, how eaſy had it been for them to have made ſome conſiderable additions to their higheſt ſpeculations, and have left out any thing which might ſeem ſo mean and contemptible as the death of the Son of God! But this they were ſo far from, that the main thing which they preached to the world, was the vanity of human wiſdom without Chriſt, and the neceſſity of all men's believing in that Jeſus who was crucified at Jeruſalem.

The Apoſtles indeed diſcover very much, infinitely more than ever the moſt lofty Platoniſt could do, concerning the goodneſs and love of God to man-

hn iii. 16. kind; but that wherein they *manifeſted the love of God to the world, was, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh,*

om. v. 8. *but have everlaſting life.* And that *herein was the love of God manifeſted, that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died*

died for us. And that *this was the greateſt truth, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners.* They never dreamt of any Divine goodneſs which ſhould make men happy without Chriſt: no, it was their deſign to perſuade the world, that all the communications of God's goodneſs to the world were wholly in and through Jeſus Chriſt; and it is impoſſible that any ſhould think otherwiſe, unleſs Plato knew more of the mind of God than our bleſſed Saviour, and Plotinus than St. Paul. Can we think now that the Apoſtles ſhould hazard the reputation of their own wits ſo much as they did to the world, and be accounted babblers, and fools, and mad-men, for preaching the way of ſalvation to be only by a perſon *crucified between two thieves at Jeruſalem*, had they not been convinced not only of the truth, but importance of it, and that it concerned men as much to believe it, as it did to avoid eternal miſery? Did St. Paul preach ever the leſs the words of truth and ſoberneſs, becauſe he was told to his face, *that his learning had made him mad?* But if he was *beſides himſelf*, *it was for Chriſt*; and what wonder was it if the *love of Chriſt* in the Apoſtle ſhould make him willing to loſe his reputation for him, ſeeing *Chriſt made himſelf of no reputation*, that he might be in a capacity to do us good? We ſee the Apoſtles *were not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt*, becauſe they knew *it was the power of God unto ſalvation*; and therefore neither in their preaching nor their writings would they omit any of thoſe paſſages concerning our Saviour's death, which might be accounted the moſt diſhonourable to his perſon. Which is certainly as great an evidence of their fidelity as can be expected; which makes Origen ſay, that the Diſciples of Chriſt writ all things φιλαλήθως καὶ εὐγνωμόνως, *with a great deal of candour and love of truth*, οὐκ ὑπεκκλέψαντες τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ παραδόξου ἱστορίας τὸ δοκοῦν τοῖς πολλοῖς αἰσχύνην τῷ λόγῳ τῶν χριστιανῶν φέρειν· *not concealing from the world thoſe paſſages of the life*

1 Tim. i. 15.

Origen cont. Celſum, l. iii. p. 127.

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BOOK II. *life of Chriſt, which would be accounted moſt fooliſh and ridiculous.*

2. *With the greateſt plainneſs and ſimplicity of ſpeech.* Such whoſe deſign is to impoſe upon the minds of men with ſome cunningly-deviſed fables, love as much ambiguity as ever Apollo did in his moſt winding oracles: of whom it is ſaid,

Ambage nexa Delphico mos eſt Deo
Arcana tegere.

Servius in Æneid. iv. Servius tells us, that Jupiter Ammon was therefore pictured with rams' horns, becauſe his anſwers had as many turnings and windings as they had. But the horns which Moſes was wont to be pictured with, did only note the light and perſpicuity (from the ambiguity of קרן, which notes *the ſending forth of rays of light like a horn)*; and yet Moſes himſelf was veiled in compariſon of the openneſs and plainneſs of ſpeech which was in the Apoſtles. Impoſtors caſt a miſt of many dark and cloudy words before them; but when they are once brought into the open light, their vizard falls off, and their deformity appears. Such perſons delight in ſoaring quite out of the apprehenſions of thoſe who follow them, and never think themſelves better recompenſed for their pains, than when they are moſt admired and leaſt underſtood. But never was Chriſtianity more diſhonoured, than when men brought it from its native ſimplicity and plainneſs, into a company of cloudy and inſignificant expreſſions; which are ſo far from making men better underſtand the truth of it, that it was certainly the Devil's deſign, by ſuch obſcure terms, to make way for a myſtery to be advanced (but it was of iniquity): and ſoon after we ſee the effect of it in another oracle, ſet up at Rome inſtead of Delphos; and all the pretence of it, was the obſcurity ſuppoſed in Scripture. What! darkneſs come by the riſing of the ſun! Or is the ſun at laſt grown ſo beggarly, that he is fain to borrow light of the earth? Muſt the

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the Scripture be beholden to the Church for its clearneſs, and Chriſt himſelf not ſpeak intelligibly, unleſs the Pope be his interpreter? Did Chriſt reveal to the world the way of ſalvation, and yet leave men to ſeek which was it, till a guide, never heard of in the Scripture, come to direct them in the way to it? What ſtrange witneſſes were the Apoſtles, if they did not ſpeak the truth with plainneſs? How had men been to ſeek as to the truth of Chriſtianity, if the Apoſtles had not declared the doctrine of the Goſpel with all evidence and perſpicuity? Whom muſt we believe in this caſe, the Apoſtles or the Roman Oracles? The Apoſtles, they tell us, *they ſpeak with all plainneſs of ſpeech*, and for that end purpoſely lay aſide *all excellency of words* and *human wiſdom*, that men might not be to ſeek for their meaning in a matter of ſo great moment; that *the Goſpel was hid to none but ſuch as are loſt, and whoſe eyes are blinded by the God of this world*; that the doctrine revealed by them is a light to direct us in our way to heaven, and a rule to walk by; and it is a ſtrange property of light to be obſcure, and of a rule to be crooked. But it is not only evident, from the Apoſtles' own affirmations, that they laid aſide all affected obſcurity, ambiguous expreſſions, and philoſophical terms, whereby the world might have been to ſeek for what they were to believe, but it is likewiſe clear from the very nature of the doctrine they preached, and the deſign of their preaching of it. What need rhetoric in plain truths? or affected phraſes in giving evidence? How incongruous would obſcure expreſſions have been to the deſign of ſaving ſouls by the fooliſhneſs of preaching? For if they had induſtriouſly ſpoken in their preaching, above the capacities of thoſe they ſpake to, they could never have converted a ſoul without a miracle: for the ordinary way of converſion muſt be by the underſtanding; and how could that work upon the underſtanding, which was ſo much above it? But, ſaith the Apoſtle, *We preach*

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2 Cor. iii. 12.

1 Cor. ii. 1, 4.

1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

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not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus' ſake. If they had ſought themſelves, or their own credit and reputation, there might have been ſome reaſon that they ſhould have uſed the way of the Sophiſts among the Greeks, and by declamatory ſpeeches to have enhanced their eſteem among the vulgar. But the Apoſtles diſowned and rejected all theſe vulgar artifices of mean and low-ſpirited men; they laid aſide all thoſe enticing words ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας, *of the way of the Heathen Sophiſts*, and declared the teſtimony of God with ſpiritual evidence; *they handled not the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifeſtation of the truth, commended themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.* Now what could be ſo ſuitable to ſuch a deſign, as the greateſt plainneſs and faithfulneſs in what they ſpake? We find in the teſtimony of the Apoſtles, ἀδὲν νόθον καὶ κυβευτικὸν καὶ πεπλασμένον καὶ πανοῦργον, as Origen ſpeaks, *Nothing that is ſpurious or counterfeit, nothing ſavouring of the cunning craftineſs of ſuch as lie in wait to deceive*; *and*, ſaith he, *it is impoſſible to think that men, never bred up in the ſophiſtry of the Greeks, nor experienced in the rhetorical inſinuations uſed among them, could ever be able ſo ſuddenly to perſuade the world to embrace that which had been a figment of their own brains.* The truth is, the Apoſtles ſpeak like men very confident of the truth of what they ſpeak, and not like ſuch who were fain to fetch in the help of all their topics, to find out ſome probable arguments to make men believe that which it is probable they did not believe themſelves; which was moſt commonly the caſe of the great orators among the Heathens. We find no pedantic flouriſhes, no flattering inſinuations, no affected cadences, no ſuch great care of the riſing and falling of words in the ſeveral ſentences, which make up ſo great a part of that which was accounted eloquence in the Apoſtles' time. Theſe things were too mean a prey for the ſpirits of the Apoſtles to quarry upon; every thing in

2 Cor. iv. 5.

1 Cor. ii. 4.

2 Cor. iv. 2.

Origen cont. Celſ. l. iii. p. 135.

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in them was grave and ſerious, every word had its due weight, every ſentence brimful of ſpiritual matter; their whole diſcourſe moſt becoming the majeſty and authority of that Spirit which they ſpake by. And therein was ſeen a great part of the infinite wiſdom of God, in the choice he made of the perſons who were to propagate the doctrine of Chriſt in the world, that they were not ſuch, who, by reaſon of their great repute and fame in the world, might eaſily draw whole multitudes to embrace their dictates, but (that there might not be the leaſt foundation for an implicit faith) they were of ſo mean rank and condition in the world, that in all probability their names had never been heard of, had not their doctrine made them famous. To this purpoſe Origen excellently ſpeaks, Οἶμαι δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν διὰ τοῦτο βεβουλῆσθαι διδασκάλοις τῷ δόγματι χρῆσθαι τοιούτοις, ἵνα μηδεμίαν μὲν ἔχῃ χώραν ὑπόνοια πιθανῶν σοφισμάτων· λαμπρῶς δὲ τοῖς συνιέναι δυναμένοις ἐμφαίνηται, ὅτι τὸ ἄδολον τῆς προαιρέσεως τῶν γραψάντων, ἐχέσης πολὺ τὸ ἀφελὲς, ἠξιώθη θειοτέρας δυνάμεως, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἀνυόσης, ἥπερ ἀνύειν δύνασθαι δοκεῖ περιβολὴ λόγων, καὶ λέξεων σύνθεσις, καὶ μετὰ διαιρέσεων καὶ τεχνολογίας Ἑλληνικῆς ἀκολουθία. *I am of opinion*, ſaith he, *that Jeſus did purpoſely make uſe of ſuch preachers of his doctrine, that there might be no place for ſuſpicion that they came inſtructed with the arts of ſophiſtry: but that it be clearly manifeſt to all that would conſider it, that there was nothing of deſign in thoſe who diſcovered ſo much ſimplicity in their writings, and that they had a more Divine power, which was more efficacious than the greateſt volubility of expreſſions, or ornaments of ſpeech, or the artifices which were uſed in the Grecian compoſitions.* Id. ibid.

3. The Apoſtles delivered their *doctrine with the greateſt openneſs and freedom of ſpirit:* they did not give out one thing to the world, and another to their private diſciples; but with great freedom and boldneſs declared their doctrine in the moſt public places, and before their greateſt enemies. They knew they were looked on as deceivers by the world; but yet

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they knew themſelves to be true, ὡς πλάνοι, καὶ ἀληθεῖς. This is the uſual requital good men have from the world, that they are looked on as the greateſt deceivers of it: if it be ſo with others, they have much leſs cauſe to wonder at it, when even he, who by one prophet is ſtyled *the deſire of nations*, is by another ſaid *to be deſpiſed and rejected of men*; and when Chriſt was in the world, he was called ὁ πλάνος, *the deceiver*; no wonder then if his Diſciples were accounted ſuch, although they manifeſted their veracity by their open carriage and free ſpeaking to the faces of their greateſt adverſaries. The Apoſtles neither feared the Jews' ſkill in their law, nor the wiſdom and ſubtlety of the Greeks. Saint Paul preacheth Chriſt openly among the Jews in their ſynagogues; and among the Athenians he encounters the Epicureans and Stoics, and preacheth to them Jeſus and the reſurrection. If the Apoſtles had any thing of deceivers in them, as to the things they related concerning Chriſt, they would not certainly have ſpoken with ſo much confidence concerning Chriſt, in the preſence of thoſe who had been his murderers: but we ſee they appealed to themſelves, as to the miracles which he had wrought among them; and for his reſurrection, they were ready to lay down their lives in giving teſtimony to the truth of it. That his body was gone, was evident; that the Apoſtles ſhould take it away was impoſſible, conſidering what a guard of ſoldiers they had ſet upon it, and how timorous and fearful the Apoſtles were, that they fled upon Chriſt's being apprehended. Now what could it be could make ſuch fearful perſons afterwards ſo courageous and reſolute as they were, had there not been ſome more than ordinary power to convince and encourage them?

2 Cor. vi. 8.

Hag. ii. 7.

Iſa. liii. 3.

Matt. xxvii. 63.

Acts xvii. 18.

4. The Apoſtles deliver their *teſtimony with the greateſt particularity as to all circumſtances*. They do not change or alter any of them upon different examinations before ſeveral perſons; they all agree in the

the greateſt conſtancy to themſelves, and uniformity with each other. As to matters of indifferency, we find the Apoſtles very yielding and condeſcending; but as to any thing which concerned their teſtimony, moſt conſtant and reſolved. Had the Goſpel been ſome cunningly-contrived fancy, it had been impoſſible but ſo many different perſons, in ſuch different places, and under ſuch different conditions, would have varied as to ſome material circumſtance of it; or elſe they would have been ſo wiſe as to have delivered it in general terms, without inſiſting much upon ſuch particular circumſtances, which, if they had been falſe, might have been very eaſily diſproved: but with what particular enumeration of circumſtances do the Apoſtles preach Chriſt to the world? Peter tells the Jews that it was *Jeſus of Nazareth whom he preached*; and, leſt they ſhould think it was not the ſame perſon who roſe again, with great boldneſs and freedom of ſpirit he ſaith unto them, *Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.* Yea, that ſame individual perſon who was converſant in the world, and died upon the *croſs, is now become a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins.* If there had been any ground of ſuſpicion as to theſe things, who had been ſo able to diſprove them, or ſo ready to do it, as thoſe perſons who had crucified him? For we cannot conceive but thoſe who had a hand in his death, would endeavour by all poſſible means to diſprove his reſurrection from the dead. For what a caſe were they like to be in, if thoſe things which the Apoſtles ſo confidently preached were true? If *Chriſt had all power now in his hands*, and *there were ſalvation in no other name, but only in his whom they had crucified*, they were like to be in a moſt deſperate condition; therefore if any men can be ſuppoſed inquiſitive after the truth of theſe circumſtances, no doubt theſe were: and if they could have found the

Acts ii. 22.

Acts ii. 36.

Acts v. 31, 32.

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leaſt flaw in their teſtimony, the world would ſoon have ringed of it, and the Jews, who were then ſo much diſperſed abroad, would have divulged it into all parts; the Apoſtles would have been told of it as they preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues. And can we in any reaſon think but thoſe Jews, who perſecuted Paul as he preached in the ſynagogues of Aſia, and afterwards impeached him ſo openly at Jeruſalem, would there enquire into all the circumſtances concerning Chriſt, and all the other Jews would write to their friends at Jeruſalem, to be fully informed of thoſe ſtrange things which were told them openly in all places in their ſynagogues by men of their own nation and language, concerning one Jeſus, who was crucified, and *roſe again* from the *dead?* Had there been now any ſo much as plauſible pretext that any of theſe circumſtances were not true, can we think but that a people ſo unmeaſurably given to their own ways and traditions, would in all places have vented any thing that might have tended to the diſparagement of Chriſt and his Apoſtles? But we ſee malice itſelf could not find any flaw in the Apoſtles' teſtimony; for if it had, we ſhould certainly have heard of it, either from the Jews, or from the great oppoſers of Chriſtianity among the Heathens, who pretended to be curious and inquiſitive perſons; ſuch as Celſus, Julian, Hierocles, and Porphyry were. What reaſon can we have then in the leaſt to ſuſpect ſuch a teſtimony, which paſſed ſo uncontrolled in that time when it was alone capable of being diſproved, and men's intereſt and deſign would put them ſo much upon it? The ſtrength of which will appear in the next propoſition, which is,

XVII. Prop. 4. *No teſtimony ought to be taken againſt a matter of fact thus atteſted, but from ſuch perſons who had greater knowledge of the things atteſted, and manifeſt greater fidelity in reporting them.* It is eaſy to make it appear, that ſuppoſing any perſons at that time had contradicted

contradicted the teſtimony of the Apoſtles concerning our Saviour, yet there had been no reaſon in the world to have hearkened to their teſtimony in oppoſition to that of the Apoſtles; and that on theſe accounts: 1. The Apoſtles witneſſed the affirmative; which is more capable of being atteſted than any negative can be. 2. The Apoſtles were more converſant with Chriſt than any other perſons were; becauſe they were choſen for that very end by him to be conſtantly with him. Could any therefore be more capable of knowing the truth of all particulars concerning Chriſt than theſe were? Had there been any ground of ſuſpicion concerning the deſign of Chriſt, why could not the Jews prevail with Judas to diſcover it, as well as to betray his perſon? Judas had done but a good work, if Chriſt had been ſuch an impoſtor as the Jews blaſphemouſly ſaid he was. What made Judas then ſo little ſatisfied with his work, that he grew weary of his life upon it, and threw himſelf away in the moſt horrid deſpair? No perſon certainly had been ſo fit to have been produced as a witneſs againſt Chriſt as Judas, who had been ſo long with him, and had heard his ſpeeches, and obſerved his miracles; but he had not patience enough to ſtay, after that horrid fact, to be a witneſs againſt him: nay, he was the greateſt witneſs at that time for him, when he who had betrayed him came to the Sanhedrin, when conſulting about his death, and told them, *that he had ſinned in betraying innocent blood.* What poſſible evidence could have been given more in behalf of our Saviour than that was? When a perſon ſo covetous as to betray his Maſter for *thirty pieces of ſilver*, was ſo weary of his bargain, that he comes and throws back the money, and declares the perſon innocent whom he had betrayed? And this perſon too was ſuch a one as knew our Saviour far better than any of the witneſſes whom afterwards they ſuborned againſt him, who yet contradicted each other, and at laſt could produce nothing which,

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Matt. xxvii 5.

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BOOK II. in the judgment of the Heathen governor, could make him judge Chriſt worthy of death. 3. The Apoſtles were freer from deſign than any counter-witneſs at that time could be. We have already proved the Apoſtles could not poſſibly have any other motive to affirm what they did, but full conviction of the truth of what they ſpake; but now, if any among the Jews at that time had aſſerted any thing contrary to the Apoſtles, we have a clear account of it, and what motive might induce them to it; viz. the preſerving of their honour and reputation with the people, the upholding their traditions, beſides their open and declared enmity againſt Chriſt, without any ſufficient reaſon at all for it. Now who would believe the teſtimony of the Scribes and Phariſees, who had ſo great authority among the people, which they were like to loſe if Chriſt's doctrine were true, before that of the Apoſtles, who parted with all for the ſake of Chriſt, and ventured themſelves wholly upon the truth of our Saviour's doctrine? 4. None ever did ſo much to atteſt the negative, as the Apoſtles did to prove their fidelity as to the affirmative. Had ſufficient counter-witneſs been timely produced, we cannot think the Apoſtles would have run ſo many continual hazards in preaching the things which related to the perſon and actions of Chriſt. Did ever any lay down their lives to undeceive the world, if the Apoſtles were guilty of abuſing it? 5. The number of ſuch perſons had been inconſiderable, in compariſon of thoſe who were ſo fully perſuaded of the truth of thoſe things which concern our Saviour; who were all ready (as moſt of them did) to ſeal the truth of them with their lives. Whence ſhould ſo many men grow ſo ſuddenly confident of the truth of ſuch things, which were contrary to their former perſuaſions, intereſt, education, had they not been delivered in ſuch a way, that they were aſſured of the undoubted truth of them? Which brings me to the laſt propoſition; which is,

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XVIII. Prop. 5.

Matters of fact being firſt believed on the account of eye-witneſſes, and received with an univerſal and uncontrolled aſſent by all ſuch perſons who have thought themſelves concerned in knowing the truth of them, do yield a ſufficient foundation for a firm aſſent to be built upon. I take it for granted that there is ſufficient foundation for a firm aſſent, where there can be no reaſon given to queſtion the evidence; which, that there is not in this preſent caſe, will appear from theſe following conſiderations.

1. *That the multitudes of thoſe perſons who did believe theſe things, had liberty and opportunity to be ſatisfied of the truth of them before they believed them*; therefore no reaſon or motive can be aſſigned on which they ſhould be induced to believe theſe things, but the undoubted evidence of truth which went along with them. I confeſs in Mahometiſm a very great number of perſons have for ſome centuries of years continued in the belief of the doctrine of Mahomet; but then withal there is a ſufficient account to be given of that, viz. *the power of the ſword*, which keeps them in awe, and ſtrictly forbids all the followers of Mahomet to diſpute their religion at all, or compare it with any other. Therefore I can no more wonder at this, than I do to ſee ſo great a part of the world under the tyranny of the great Turk. Neither, on the other ſide, do I wonder that ſuch a multitude of thoſe profeſſing Chriſtianity ſhould, together with it, believe a great number of erroneous doctrines, and live in the practice of many groſs ſuperſtitions; becauſe I conſider what a ſtrange prevalency education hath upon ſofter ſpirits and more eaſy intellectuals, and what an awe an inquiſition bears upon timorous and irreſolved perſons. But now when a great multitude of perſons, ſober and inquiſitive, ſhall, contrary to the principles of their education, and without fear of any human force (which they before-hand ſee will perſecute them), and after diligent enquiry made into the grounds on which they believe, forſake all

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all their former perſuaſions, and reſolvedly adhere to the truth of the doctrine propounded to them, though it coſt them their lives; if this gives us not reaſon to think this doctrine true, we muſt believe mankind to be the moſt unhappy creatures in the world, that will with ſo much reſolution part with all advantages of this life for the ſake of one to come, if that be not undoubtedly certain, and the doctrine propoſing it infallibly true. It is an obſervable circumſtance in the propagation of Chriſtian religion, that though God made choice at firſt of perſons generally of mean rank and condition in the world to be preachers of the Goſpel, God thereby making it appear that *our faith did not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God*, and therefore *choſe the weak things of the world to confound the ſtrong*; yet ſoon after the Goſpel was preached abroad in the world, we find perſons of great place and reputation, of great parts and abilities, engaged in the profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith. In the hiſtory of the Acts we read of Sergius a Proconſul, of Dionyſius the Areopagite, converted to the faith; and in the following ages of the Church, many perſons of great eſteem for their excellent learning and abilities. Such was Juſtin Martyr, one who, before he became a Chriſtian, was converſant with all ſects of philoſophers, Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, and at laſt was a profeſſed Platoniſt, till he was converted from Plato to Chriſt; and then found that true which he ſpeaks of in his Dialogue with Trypho, that after all his enquiries into philoſophy, ſpeaking of the doctrine of Chriſt, ταύτην μόνην εὕρισκον φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφορον, *I found this at laſt to be the only ſure and profitable philoſophy*. And when Trypho after derides him as a man of very eaſy faith, who would leave the doctrine of Plato for that of Chriſt (for it ſeems by him the Jews then had a more favourable opinion of the ſtate of Platoniſts than Chriſtians), Juſtin is ſo far from being moved with ſuch reproaches, that he tells him he would

1 Cor. ii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 27.

Juſtin. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 225. Ed. Par.

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would undertake to demonſtrate to him, ὅτι οὐ κενοῖς ἐπιστεύσαμεν μύθοις, οὐδὲ ἀναποδείκτοις λόγοις, ἀλλὰ μετὰ πνεύματος θείου καὶ δυνάμεως βρύουσι, καὶ τεθηλόσι χάριτι, *that the Chriſtians did not give credit to empty fables and unprovable aſſertions, but to ſuch a doctrine as was full of a Divine ſpirit and power, and flouriſhed with grace*; the proving of which is the ſubject of that diſcourſe. At Alexandria we meet with a ſucceſſion of excellent perſons, all which were not only embracers themſelves, but defenders of the Chriſtian faith; for ſetting aſide there Abilius, Juſtus, Cerdo, Eumenes, Marcus, Celadion, Agrippinus, Julianus, Demetrius, and others who flouriſhed about the ſecond century, I ſhall only fix on thoſe perſons who were famous enquirers after truth, and noted for excellency in Heathen learning; yet theſe perſons, after all their enquiries, found nothing to fix on but the Chriſtian faith, and valued no other diſcovery of truth in compariſon with that. Such was Pantænus, who, as Euſebius tells us, was an excellent Stoic before he became a Chriſtian, and was after ſo eminent a one, that, in imitation of the Apoſtles, he went into India to convert the inhabitants to the Chriſtian faith, and at his return was made rector of the ſchool at Alexandria; which, as the ſame author tells us, was much frequented by ſuch who were ἐν λόγῳ καὶ τῇ περὶ τὰ θεῖα σοφίᾳ δυνατοί, *well ſkilled in human as well as divine learning*. How excellent Pantænus was in human learning, may appear, in that Origen and Jerome both make his example their plea for their ſtudying of it. After him ſucceeded Clemens Alexandrinus, Pantænus's ſcholar; a perſon of great depth of learning, and exquiſitely ſkilled in all Heathen antiquities, as appears by his remaining writings. The learning of Origen is ſufficiently known; which was in ſuch great reputation in his own time, that not only Chriſtians but philoſophers flocked to his lectures at Alexandria, as Euſebius tell us, wherein he read the mathematics, and other parts of philoſophy, as

CHAP. IX.

Ibid. p. 226.

Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. v. c. 10. Ed. Cant.

Ibid. l. vi. c. 19.

Ibid. l. vi. c. 18.

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as well as the Scriptures; and the ſame author informs us, that the philoſophers did dedicate their books to him, and ſometimes choſe him as arbitrator between them in matters of diſpute; and Porphyry himſelf, in his books againſt the Chriſtians, vouchſafed a high encomium of Origen for his excellent learning. In Origen's time, Heraclas, a preſbyter of Alexandria, for five years together frequented the ſchools of the philoſophers, and put on the philoſophic pallium, βιβλία τε ἑλλήνων καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν οὐ παύεται φιλολόγων, *and was very converſant in the books of the Grecian learning.* Beſides theſe, we read of Pierius and Achillas, two preſbyters of Alexandria, who were τῇ καθ' ἕλληνας παιδείᾳ καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ δεδοκιμασμένοι, as Nicephorus Calliſtus ſpeaks, *perſons well ſkilled in the Grecian learning and philoſophy.* If from Alexandria we go to Cæſarea, there we not only meet with a ſchool of learning among the Chriſtians, but with perſons very eminent in all kinds of learning; ſuch were the famous Pamphilus and Euſebius ſo great an admirer of him, that ever ſince he is called Euſebius Pamphili. At Antioch was Dorotheus, ἀνὴρ παντοίων λόγων καὶ παιδείας ἐλευθερίας, as Nicephorus ſpeaks, *a perſon verſed in all kind of ingenuous literature.* Anatolius, Biſhop of Laodicea, one verſed in geometry, aſtronomy, and all kind of philoſophy, as well as the doctrine of Chriſt. Thus we ſee, how in thoſe early days of the Greek Church, what excellent perſons many of thoſe were who were zealous profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and concerning thoſe of the Latin Church, I ſhall only mention that ſpeech of St. Auſtin, who was himſelf an inſtance of the ſame nature, and a ſtar of the firſt magnitude among them. *Nonne aſpicimus quanto auro & argento & veſte ſuffarcinatus exierit de Ægypto Cyprianus doctor ſuaviſſimus & martyr beatiſſimus? Quanto Lactantius? Quanto Victorinus, Optatus, Hilarius? Ut de vivis taceam: quanto innumerabiles Græci? Quod prior ipſe fideliſſimus Dei famulus Moyſes fecerat, de quo ſcriptum eſt, quod eruditus ſuerit*

Ibid. l. vi. c. 19.

Nicephor. Hiſt. Eccl. l. vi. c. 35.

Idem, l. vi. c. 36.

S. Auguſtin. de Doctr. Chriſtiana, l. ii. c. 40. Ed. Par.

rit omni ſapientia Egyptiorum. To whoſe catalogue of learned perſons, among the Latin Chriſtians, Tertullian, Arnobius, and ſeveral others, may be deſervedly added. But as St. Auſtin there well obſerves, *though the Iſraelites went rich out of Egypt, yet it was their eating the Paſſover which ſaved them from deſtruction:* ſo though theſe were accompliſhed with thoſe perfections and riches of the ſoul, the ornaments of learning, yet it was their eating the true Paſſover, which was Chriſt, by their adhering to his doctrine, was that which would be of more advantage to them than all their accompliſhments would be. Now, then, ſince in the firſt ages of the Chriſtian Church we find not only innumerable multitudes of perſons of great integrity and ſobriety in their lives embracing the doctrine of Chriſt, but ſo many perſons that were curious enquirers after the truth of things, we can certainly have no reaſon to diſtruſt ſuch a teſtimony, which was received in ſo unanimous a manner by perſons as able to judge of the truth of things, and as fearful of being deceived in reference to them, as any now in the world can be. CHAP. IX.

2. As this teſtimony was received by perſons inquiſitive after the truth of things, ſo *the doctrine conveyed by it was a matter of the higheſt moment in the world*; and therefore we cannot conceive but perſons ordinarily inquiſitive about other things, would be more than ordinarily ſo about this, becauſe their eternal welfare and happineſs did depend upon it. All perſons that are truly religious, muſt at leaſt be allowed to be perſons very inquiſitive after the ſtate and condition of their ſouls when they ſhall be diſlodged from their bodies. And if we do but grant this, can we in any reaſon think that ſuch a multitude of perſons, in ſo many ages, ſhould continue venturing their ſouls upon a teſtimony which they had no aſſurance of the truth of? And that none of all theſe perſons, though men otherwiſe rational and judicious, ſhould be able to diſcover the falſity of that XIX.

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BOOK II. that doctrine they went upon, if at leaſt any, upon conſideration of it, can imagine it to be ſo? It is not reconcileable with the general preſumption of human nature, concerning Divine Providence and the care God takes of the welfare of men, to ſuffer ſo many perſons, who ſincerely deſire to ſerve God in the way which is moſt pleaſing to him, to go on in ſuch a continual deluſion, and never have it at all diſcovered to them. If all men then who have believed the doctrine of Chriſt to be the only way to ſalvation, have been deceived, either we muſt deny altogether a Divine Providence, or ſay the Devil hath more power to deceive men, than God hath to direct them, which is worſe than the former; or elſe aſſert, that there are no ſuch things at all as either God or Devils, but that all things come to paſs by chance and fortune: and if ſo, it is ſtill more inexplicable why ſuch multitudes of rational and ſerious men, and the moſt inquiſitive part of the world as to ſuch things, ſhould all be ſo poſſeſſed with the truth and certainty of theſe things; and the more profane, wicked, and ignorant any perſons are, the more prone they are to mock and deride them. If ſuch men then ſee more into truth and reaſon than the ſober and judicious part of mankind, let us bid adieu to humanity, and adore the brutes, ſince we admire their judgment moſt who come the neareſt to them.

3. *The multitude of theſe perſons thus conſenting in this teſtimony, could have no other engagements to this conſent, but only their firm perſuaſion of the truth of the doctrine conveyed by it*; becauſe thoſe who unanimouſly agree in this thing, are ſuch perſons whoſe other deſigns and intereſts in this world differ as much as any men's do. If it had been only a conſent of the Jews, there might have been ſome probable pretence to have ſuſpected a matter of intereſt in it; but as to this thing, we find the Jews divided among themſelves about it, and the ſtiffeſt deniers of the truth of it do yet inviolably preſerve thoſe ſacred records among

among them, from which the truth of the doctrine of Chriſt may be undoubtedly proved. Had the Chriſtian religion been enforced upon the world by the Roman Emperors at the time of its firſt promulgation, there would have been ſome ſuſpicion of particular deſign in it; but it came with no other ſtrength but the evidence of its own truth: yet it found ſudden and ſtrange entertainment among perſons of all nations and degrees of men. In a ſhort time it had eaten into the heart of the Roman empire, and made ſo large a ſpread therein, that it made Tertullian ſay, *Heſterni ſumus, & veſtra omnia implevimus, urbes, inſulas, caſtella, municipia, conciliabula, caſtra ipſa, tribus, decurias, palatium, ſenatum, forum; ſola vobis relinquimus Templa. We have but newly appeared,* ſaith he, *and yet we have filled all places with our company, but only your Temples.* And before, ſpeaking of the Heathens, *Obſeſſam vociferantur civitatem, in agris, in caſtellis, in inſulis Chriſtianos, omnem ſexum, ætatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem tranſgredi ad hoc nomen quaſi detrimento mœrent. All ſorts and conditions of men, in all places, were ſuddenly become Chriſtians.* What common tye could there be now to unite all theſe perſons together, if we ſet aſide the undoubted truth and certainty of the doctrine of Chriſt, which was firſt preached to them by ſuch who were eye-witneſſes of Chriſt's actions, and had left ſacred records behind them, containing the ſubſtance of the doctrine of Chriſt, and thoſe admirable inſtructions, which were their only certain guides in the way to Heaven?

CHAP. IX.

Tertull. Apol. c. 37. Ed. Pamel.

Ibid. c. 1.

4. *Becauſe many perſons do join in this conſent with true Chriſtians, who yet could heartily wiſh that the doctrine of Chriſtianity were not true.* Such are all thoſe perſons who are ſenſual in their lives, and walk not according to the rules of the Goſpel, yet dare not queſtion or deny the truth of it. Such who could heartily wiſh there were no future ſtate, nor judgment to come, that they might indulge themſelves in

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BOOK II. in this world without fear of another; yet their conſciences are ſo far convinced of, and awed by the truth of theſe things, that they raiſe many perplexities and anxieties in their minds, which they would moſt willingly be rid of; which they can never thoroughly be, till, inſtead of having the name of Chriſtians, they come to live the life of Chriſtians, and become experimentally acquainted with the truth and power of religion: and withal we find that the more men have been acquainted with the practice of Chriſtianity, the greater evidence they have had of the truth of it, and been more fully and rationally perſuaded of it. To ſuch I grant there are ſuch powerful evidences of the truth of the doctrine of Chriſt, by the effectual workings of the Spirit of God upon their ſouls, that all other arguments, as to their own ſatisfaction, may fall ſhort of theſe. As to which, thoſe verſes of the poet Dantes, rendered into Latin by F. S. are very pertinent and ſignificant; for when he had introduced the Apoſtle Peter, aſking him what it was which his faith was founded on, he anſwers,

Deinde exivit ex luce profunda
Quæ illic ſplendebat pretioſa gemma,
Super quam omnis virtus fundatur.

i. e. *That God was pleaſed, by immediate revelation of himſelf, to diſcover that Divine truth to the world, whereon our faith doth ſtand as on its ſure foundation*; but when the Apoſtle goes on to enquire how he knew this at firſt came from God, his anſwer to that is,

——larga pluvia
Spiritus Sancti, quæ eſt diffuſa
Super veteres & ſuper novas membranas,
Eſt ſyllogiſmus ille qui eam mihi concluſit
Adeo acute, ut præ illa demonſtratione
Omnis demonſtratio alia mihi videatur obtuſa.

i. e.

i. e. *That the Spirit of God doth ſo fully diſcover itſelf both in the Old and New Teſtament, that all other arguments are but dull and heavy if compared with this.* It is true, they are ſo to a truly enlightened conſcience, which diſcovers ſo much beauty and glory in the Scriptures, that they raviſh the ſoul, although it be unable to give ſo full an account of this unto others, who want the eyes to ſee that beauty with, which a heart truly gracious hath. We ſee ordinarily in the world, that the attraction of beauty is an unaccountable thing; and one may diſcern that which raviſheth him, which another looks on as mean and ordinary. And why may it not be much more thus in Divine objects, which want ſpiritual eyes to diſcover them? Therefore I grant that good men enjoy that ſatisfaction to their own conſciences, as to the truth of the doctrine of Chriſt, which others cannot attain to; but yet I ſay, that ſuch do likewiſe ſee the moſt ſtrong, rational, and convincing evidence, which doth induce them to believe; which evidence is then moſt convincing, when it is ſeconded by the peculiar energy of the ſpirit of God upon the ſouls of true believers. But yet we ſee that the power and force of the truth of theſe things may be ſo great, even upon ſuch minds which are not yet moulded into the faſhion of true goodneſs, that it may awe with its light and clearneſs where it doth not ſoften and alter by its heat and influence. Now whence can it be that ſuch convictions ſhould ſtick ſo faſt in the minds of thoſe who would fain pull out thoſe piercing arrows, but that there is a greater power in them than they are maſters of, and they cannot ſtand againſt the force whereby they come upon them, nor find any ſalve to cure the wounds which are made within them, but by thoſe weapons which were the cauſes of them? And therefore when wicked perſons, under conflicts of conſcience, cannot eaſe themſelves by direct atheiſm, or finding reaſon to caſt off ſuch convictions by diſcerning any invalidity in the teſti-

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mony whereon the truth of these things depends, it is a certain argument that there is abundant truth in that testimony, when men would fain persuade themselves to believe the contrary, and yet cannot.

5. The truth of this consent appears, *from the unanimity of it among those persons who have yet strangely differed from each other in many controversies in religion.* We see thereby this unanimity is no forced or designed thing, because we see the persons agreeing in this, do very much disagree from each other in other things: and the same grounds and reasons whereon they disagree as to other things, would have held as to these too, were there not greater evidence of the certainty of these things than of those they fall out about. It hath not yet become a question among those who differ so much about the sense of Scripture, whether the Scripture itself be the Word of God; although the very accounts on which we are to believe it to be so, have been the subject of no mean controversies. All the divided parts of the Christian world do yet fully agree in the matters of fact, viz. *that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, and that he did many great miracles; that he died on the cross at Jerusalem, and rose again from the dead.* Now these contain the great foundations of Christian faith, and therefore the multitude of other controversies in the world ought to be so far from weakening our faith as to the truth of the doctrine of Christ (which men of weak judgments and atheistical spirits pretend), that it ought to be a strong confirmation of it, when we see persons, which so peevishly quarrel with each other about some inferior and less weighty parts of religion, do yet unanimously consent in the principal foundations of Christian faith, and such whereon the necessity of faith and obedience, as the way to salvation, doth more immediately depend. And this may be one great reason why the infinitely wise God may suffer such lamentable contentions and divisions to be in the Christian world, that thereby inquisitive

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inquiſitive perſons may ſee, that, if religion had been a mere deſign of ſome few politic perſons, the quarrelſome world (where it is not held in by force) would never have conſented ſo long in the owning ſuch common principles, which all the other controverſies are built upon. And although it be continually ſeen that in divided parties one is apt to run from any thing which is received by the other, and men generally think they can never run far enough from them whoſe errors they have diſcovered, that yet this principle hath not carried any conſiderable party of the Chriſtian world (out of their indignation againſt thoſe great corruptions which have crept into the world under a pretence of religion) to the diſowning the foundation of Chriſtian faith, muſt be partly imputed to the ſignal hand of Divine Providence, and partly to thoſe ſtrong evidences which there are of the truth of that teſtimony which conveys to us the foundations of Chriſtian faith. Thus we ſee now how great and uncontrolled this conſent is, as to the matters of fact delivered down from the eye-witneſſes of them, concerning the actions and miracles of our bleſſed Saviour (which are contained in the Scriptures as authentic records of them), and what a ſure foundation there is for a firm aſſent to the truth of the things from ſo univerſal and uninterrupted a tradition. CHAP. IX.

XX. Thus far we have now manifeſted the neceſſity of the miracles of Chriſt, in order to the propagation of Chriſtianity in the world, from the conſideration of the perſons who were to propagate it in the world. The next thing we are to conſider, is, the admirable ſucceſs which the Goſpel met with in the world, upon its being preached to it; of which no rational account can be given, unleſs the actions and miracles of our Saviour were moſt undoubtedly true. That the Goſpel of Chriſt had very ſtrange and wonderful ſucceſs upon its firſt preaching, hath been partly diſcovered already, and is withal ſo plain, from the long

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BOOK II. continuance of it in these European parts, that none any ways conversant in the history of former ages can have any ground to question it. But that this strange and admirable success of the doctrine of Christ should be an evidence of the truth of it, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of it, will appear from these two considerations. 1. *That the doctrine itself was so directly contrary to the general inclinations of the world.* 2. *That the propagation of it was so much opposed by all worldly power.*

1. *That the doctrine itself was so opposite to the general inclinations of the world.* The doctrine may be considered either as to its *credenda*, or matters of faith, or as to its *agenda*, or matters of life and practice. Both these were contrary to the inclinations of the world; the former seemed hard and incredible, the latter harsh and impossible.

1. The matters of faith which were to be believed by the world, were not such things which we may imagine the vulgar sort of men would be very forward to run after, nor very greedy to embrace. 1. *Because contrary to the principles of their education, and the religion they were brought up in.* The generality of mankind is very tenacious of those principles and prejudices which are sucked in in the time of infancy. There are some religions one would think it were impossible that any rational men should believe them, but only on this account; because they are bred up under them. It is a very great advantage any religion hath against another, that it comes to speak first, and thereby insinuates such an apprehension of itself to the mind, that it is very hard removing it afterwards. The understanding seems to be of the nature of those things which are *communis juris*, and therefore *primi sunt possidentis*; when an opinion hath once got possession of the mind, it usually keeps out whatever comes to disturb it. Now we cannot otherwise conceive but all those persons who had been bred up under Paganism and the most gross idolatry,

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idolatry, must needs have a very potent prejudice against such a doctrine, which was wholly irreconcileable with that religion which they had been devoted to. Now the stronger the prejudice is which is conveyed into men's minds by the force of education, the greater strength and power must there needs be in the Gospel of Christ, which did so easily demolish these strong holds, and captivate the understandings of men to the obedience of Christ. To which purpose Arnobius excellently speaks in these words to the Heathens; *Sed non creditis gesta hæc. Sed qui ea conspicati sunt fieri, & sub oculis suis viderunt agi, testes optimi certissimique auctores, & crediderunt hæc ipsi, & credenda posteris nobis haud exilibus cum approbationibus tradiderunt. Quinam isti sint, fortasse quæritis? gentes, populi, nationes & incredulum illud genus humanum. Quod nisi aperta res esset, & luce ipsa, quemadmodum dicitur, clarior, nunquam rebus hujusmodi credulitatis suæ commodarent assensum. An nunquid dicemus illius temporis homines usque adeo fuisse vanos, mendaces, stolidos, brutos, ut, quæ nunquam viderant, vidisse se fingerent? et quæ facta omnino non erant, falsis proderent testimoniis aut puerili assertione firmarent? Cumque possent vobiscum & unanimiter vivere, & inoffensas ducere conjunctiones, gratuita susciperent odia & execrabili haberentur in nomine? Quod si falsa, ut dicitis, historia illa rerum est, unde tam brevi tempore totus mundus ista religione completus est? Aut in unam coire qui potuerunt mentem gentes regionibus dissitæ, ventis, cœlique convexionibus dimotæ? Asseverationibus illectæ sunt nudis, inductæ in spes cassas, & in pericula capitis immittere se sponte temeraria desperatione voluerunt, cum nihil tale vidissent, quod eas in hos cultus novitatis suæ possit excitare miraculo. Imo quia hæc omnia & ab ipso cernebant geri & ab ejus præconibus, qui per orbem totum missi beneficia patris & munera sanandis animis hominibusque portabant, veritatis ipsius vi victæ, & dederunt se Deo, nec in magnis posuere dispendiis membra vobis projicere, & viscera sua lanianda præbere.* The substance of whose discourse is,

Arnobius cont. Gentes, l. i. p. 33. Ed. Lugd.

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that it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe ſo many perſons, of ſo many nations, to be ſo far beſotted and infatuated, as not only to believe a religion to be true, which was contrary to that they were educated in, but to venture their lives as well as eſtates upon it, had it not been diſcovered to them in a moſt certain and infallible way, by ſuch who had been eye-witneſſes of the actions and miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. And as he elſewhere ſpeaks, *Vel hæc ſaltem fidem vobis faciant argumenta credendi, quod jam per omnes terras in tam brevi temporis ſpatio immenſi nominis hujus ſacramenta diffuſa ſunt; quod nulla jam natio eſt tam barbari moris, & manſuetudinem neſciens, quæ non ejus amore verſa molliverit aſperitatem ſuam, & in placidos ſenſus aſſumpta tranquillitate migraverit; quod tam magnis ingeniis præditi oratores, grammatici, rhetores, conſulti juris ac medici, philoſophiæ etiam ſecreta rimantes, magiſteria hæc expetunt, ſpretis quibus paulo ante fidebant*, &c. Will not this perſuade the world what firm foundations the faith of Chriſtians ſtands on, when in ſo ſhort a time it is ſpread over all parts of the world? That by it the moſt inhuman and barbarous nations are ſoftened into more than civility: that men of the greateſt wits and parts, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, phyſicians, philoſophers, who not? have forſaken their former ſentiments, and adhered to the doctrine of Chriſt. Now, I ſay, if the power of education be ſo ſtrong upon the minds of men, to perſuade them of the truth of the religion they are bred up under (which atheiſtically diſpoſed perſons make ſo much advantage of), this is ſo far from weakening the truth of Chriſtianity, that it proves a great confirmation of it; becauſe it obtained ſo much upon its firſt preaching in the world, notwithſtanding the higheſt prejudices from education were againſt it. If then men be ſo prone to believe that to be moſt true which they have been educated under, it muſt argue a more than ordinary evidence and power in that religion which unſettles ſo much the

Ibid. l. ii. p. 44.

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the principles of education, as to make men not only queſtion the truth of them, but to renounce them, and embrace a religion contrary to them:

XXI.

Eſpecially when we withal conſider what ſtrong holds theſe principles of education were backed with among the Heathens, when the doctrine of Chriſt was firſt divulged among them; i. e. what plauſible pretences they had of continuing in the religion which they were brought up in, and why they ſhould not exchange it for Chriſtianity; and thoſe were,

1. *The pretended antiquity of their religion above the Chriſtian.* The main thing pleaded againſt the Chriſtians, was *divortium ab inſtitutis majorum*, that they thought themſelves wiſer than their forefathers; and Symmachus, Lybanius, and others, plead this moſt in behalf of Paganiſm, *ſervanda eſt tot ſæculis fides, & ſequendi ſunt nobis parentes qui ſecuti ſunt feliciter ſuos*; their religion pleaded preſcription againſt any other, and they were reſolved to follow the ſteps of their anceſtors, wherein they thought themſelves happy and ſecure. Cæcilius, in Minutius Felix, firſt argues much againſt dogmatizing in religion; but withal ſays, it moſt becomes a lover of truth, *majorum excipere diſciplinam, religiones traditas colere, deos quos a parentibus ante imbutus es timere; nec de numinibus ferre ſententiam, ſed prioribus credere.* So Arnobius tells us the main thing objected againſt the Chriſtians, was, *novellam eſſe religionem noſtram, & ante dies natam propemodum paucos, neque vos potuiſſe antiquam & patriam linquere, & in barbaros ritus peregrinoſque traduci.* And Cotta in Tully long before laid this down as the main principle of Pagan religion, *majoribus noſtris, etiam nulla ratione reddita, credere; to believe the tradition of our fathers, although there be no evidence in reaſon for it:* and after he had diſcovered the vanity of the ſtoical arguments about religion, concludes with this as the only thing he reſolved his religion into, *Mihi unum ſatis erit, majores noſtros ita tradidiſſe; it is enough for me that it comes by tradition from our fore-*

Tertull. ad Nat. l. i. cap. 10
Symmach. Ep. l. x. ep. 61.
Liban. Orat. de Templis.
Minutius Felix, p. 43. Ed. Ouze.
Arnob. cont. Gentes, l. ii. p. 90.
Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 2.
Ibid. c. 4.

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fathers. Lactantius fully sets forth the manner of pleading used by the Heathens against the Christians, in point of antiquity. *Hæ sunt religiones quas sibi à majoribus suis traditas, pertinaciſſime tueri ac defendere perſeverant; nec conſiderant quales ſint, ſed ex hoc probatas atque veras eſſe confidunt, quod eas veteres tradiderunt; tantaque eſt auctoritas vetuſtatis, ut inquirere in eam ſcelus eſſe dicatur.* The Engliſh is, They accounted tradition infallible, and knew no other way whereby to find the truth of religion, but by its conveyance from their forefathers. How like herein do they ſpeak to thoſe who contend for the corruptions crept into the Chriſtian Church; who make uſe of the ſame pretences for them, viz. that they were delivered down from the fathers; *tantaque eſt auctoritas vetuſtatis, ut inquirere in eam ſcelus eſſe dicatur*; *who are we who will ſee further than antiquity?* But it is no wonder if antiquity be accompanied with dimneſs of ſight; and ſo it was, undoubtedly, as to the Pagan world, and as to the Chriſtian too, when ſuch a mixture of Heatheniſm came into it. And the very ſame arguments by which the pleaders for Chriſtianity did juſtify the truth of their religion, notwithſtanding this pretended antiquity, will with equal force hold for a reformation of ſuch inveterate abuſes, which, under a pretence of antiquity, have crept into the Chriſtian Church. *Nullus pudor eſt ad meliora tranſire*, ſaith Ambroſe in his anſwer to Symmachus: *What ſhame is it to grow better? Quid facies?* ſaith Lactantius, *majoreſne potius an rationem ſequeris? Si rationem mavis, diſcedere te neceſſe eſt ab inſtitutis & auctoritate majorum: quoniam id ſolum rectum eſt, quod ratio præſcribit. Sin autem pietas majores ſequi ſuadet: fateris igitur & ſtultos illos eſſe qui excogitatis contra rationem religionibus ſervierint; & te ineptum qui id colas quod falſum eſſe conviceris.* Where reaſon and mere authority of forefathers ſtand in competition, he is more a child than a man that knows not on which ſide to give his ſuffrage. But with the greateſt ſtrength

Lactant. de Orig. Error. l. ii. c. 6.

Ambroſ. l. 1 p. c. Symmach.

Lactant. de Orig. Error. l. ii. c. 6.

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ſtrength and cleareſt reaſon Arnobius ſpeaks in this caſe. *Itaque cum nobis intenditis averſionem à religione priorum, cauſam convenit ut inſpiciatis, non factum; nec quid reliquerimus opponere, ſed ſecuti quid ſimus potiſſimum, contueri.* *When you charge us*, ſaith he, *that we are revolted from the religion of our forefathers, you ought not preſently to condemn the fact, but to examine the reaſons of it; neither ought you ſo much to look at what we have left, as what it is we have embraced.* *Nam ſi mutare ſententiam culpa eſt ulla vel crimen, & à veteribus inſtitutis in alias res novas voluntateſque migrare, criminatio iſta & vos ſpectat, qui toties vitam conſuetudinemque mutaſtis; qui in mores alios, atque alios ritus priorum condemnatione tranſiſtis.* If mere departing from the religion of our anceſtors be the great fault, all thoſe who own themſelves to be Chriſtians were themſelves guilty of it when they revolted from Heatheniſm. If it be here ſaid that the caſe is different, becauſe there was ſufficient reaſon for it, which there is not as to the corruptions of the Chriſtian Church; if ſo, then all the diſpute is taken off from the matter of fact, or the revolt to the cauſes inducing to it; and if the Proteſtant be not able, as to the cauſes of our ſeparation from Rome, to manifeſt that they were ſufficient, let him then be triumphed over by the Romaniſt, and not before. I aſſert, then, and that with much aſſurance of mind, that the principles of the Reformation are juſtifiable upon the ſame grounds of reaſon which the embracing Chriſtianity was, when men of Heathens became Chriſtians; and that the arguments made uſe of by the Romaniſts, againſt our ſeparation from them, are ſuch as would have juſtified a Pagan philoſopher in not embracing Chriſtianity. For if it be unlawful for any party of men to divide from others in a matter of religion which pretends antiquity and univerſality, it had been unlawful for a philoſopher to have deſerted Paganiſm, as well as for a Proteſtant to depart from Rome: for according to the principles of the Romaniſts,

Arnobius cont. Gent. l. ii. p. 90.

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manifſts, the judgment in the cauſe of the ſeparation, and of the truth of religion, lies in that party from which we depart. If we do now but apply this to the old Roman ſenate, or Emperors, in the caſe of Chriſtian religion, and dividing from Heathen worſhip, we ſhall quickly ſee how eaſy a matter it will be to make Chriſtianity itſelf a ſchiſm, and the doctrine of Chriſt the greateſt hereſy. But as ſtrong as thoſe pretences were then, or have been ſince, the power of the doctrine of Chriſt hath been ſo great as to conquer them, and thereby to manifeſt that it was of God, when ſuch potent prejudices were not able to withſtand it. Of which antiquity is the firſt.

2. *The large and univerſal ſpread of Pagan religion*, when Chriſtianity came into the world: there was never ſo great catholiciſm, as in Heathen worſhip, when the Apoſtles firſt appeared in the Gentile world. *Inde adeo per univerſa imperia, provincias, oppida, videmus ſingulos ſacrorum ritus gentiles habere, & Deos colere municipes*, ſaith Cæcilius in Minutius Felix. The great charge againſt the Chriſtians was *noveliſm*; that they brought in a ſtrange and unheard-of religion. The common queſtion was, *Where was your religion before Jeſus of Nazareth?* As it has been ſince, *Where was your religion before Luther?* And the ſame anſwer which ſerved then will ſtand unmoveable now: *There where no other religion is, in the word of God.* For this was the weapon whereby the primitive Chriſtians defended themſelves againſt the aſſaults of Paganiſm; and the evidences they brought that the doctrine preached by them, and contained in the Scriptures, was originally from God, were the only means of overthrowing Paganiſm, notwithſtanding its pretended univerſality.

Minut. in Octav. P. 43.

3. *Settlement by laws of Heathen worſhip.* This was ſo much pretended and pleaded for, that, as far as we can find by the hiſtory of the primitive Church, the pretence on which the Chriſtians ſuffered, was ſedition, and oppoſing the eſtabliſhed laws. The Chriſtians

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Chriſtians were reckoned *inter illicitas factiones*, as appears by Tertullian, among *unlawful corporations*. The politicians and ſtateſmen were all for preſerving the laws; they troubled not themſelves much about any religion, but only that which was ſettled by law they ſought to uphold, becauſe the acting contrary to it might bring ſome diſturbance to the civil ſtate. There were ſeveral laws which the Chriſtians were then brought under, and condemned for the breach of. 1. The law againſt *hetæriæ*, or *conventicles*, as they were pleaſed frequently to ſtile the meeting of Chriſtians together; thence the places, where the Chriſtians aſſembled for worſhip, were commonly called *conventicula*. *Ita appellabant loca*, ſaith Heraldus, *ubi congregabantur Chriſtiani oraturi, & verbi divini interpretationem accepturi, ac ſacras Synaxes habituri*. But Elmenhorſtius more ſhortly; *Conventicula loca ſunt ubi Chriſtiani congregati orare conſueverunt. The places, where the Chriſtians did meet and pray together, were called conventicles. In Baſilica Sicinnini ubi ritus Chriſtiani eſt conventiculum*, ſaith Ammianus Marcellinus; *cur immaniter conventicula dirui?* ſaith Arnobius; *qui univerſum populum cum ipſo pariter conventiculo concremavit*, as Lactantius likewiſe ſpeaks. Now the reaſon of the name was, becauſe the Heathens judged theſe aſſemblies of Chriſtians to be illegal ſocieties: for which we are to underſtand, that in the time of the Roman Emperors, when they grew ſuſpicious of their own ſafety, they ſeverely prohibited all thoſe *ſodalitia*, or ſocieties and colleges, which were very much in uſe in the Roman Commonwealth, in imitation of the ἑταιρίαι in the cities of Greece. Theſe were ſuch ſocieties of perſons which voluntarily confederated together, either for ſome particular deſign, or for preſerving love and friendſhip among each other, and thence had their frequent meetings in common together. Now the more numerous theſe were, and the more cloſely they confederated, the more jealous eye the Roman Emperors

Tertull. Apol. c. 38.

Herald. Obſervat. in Arnob. l. iv.

Am. Marc. Hiſt. l. xxvii. c. 3. Ed. Lugd. Arnob. l. iv. p. 152. Lactant. l. v. c. 11.

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perors had upon them, becauſe of ſome clandeſtine deſign which they ſuſpected might be carried on for diſturbance of the public peace in ſuch ſuſpicious meetings. Thence came out many particular edicts of the Emperors againſt all ſuch kinds of ſocieties.

Now when the Chriſtians began to be ſomewhat numerous, and had, according to the principles of their religion, frequent aſſemblies for Divine worſhip, and did confederate together by ſuch ſymbols, of being waſhed with water, and eating and drinking together (which was all the Heathens apprehended by their uſe of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper), the pro-conſuls and other magiſtrates, in their ſeveral provinces, bring the Chriſtians under theſe edicts, and ſo puniſhed them for the breach of the laws. Which, as appears by Pliny's Epiſtle to Trajan, was the only account on which the wiſer Heathens did proceed againſt the Chriſtians; for we ſee he troubled not himſelf much about the truth and evidence of Chriſtian religion, but ſuch perſons were brought before him, and after he had interrogated them whether they were Chriſtians or no, ſeveral times, if they perſiſted, he then puniſhed them, not ſo much for their religion, as for their obſtinacy and contempt of authority. For ſo much is implied in thoſe words of his, *Neque enim dubitabam, qualecunque eſſet quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe, & inflexibilem obſtinationem debere puniri: that whatever their religion was, their obſtinacy and diſobedience deſerved puniſhment.* That which the Chriſtians now pleaded for themſelves, why they ſhould not be reckoned among the factions of the people, was that which they gave to Pliny, that all their fault was, *Quod eſſent ſoliti ſtato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Chriſto quaſi Deo dicere ſecum invicem; ſeque ſacramento non in ſcelus aliquod obſtringere, ſed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depoſitum appellati abnegarent. That they were wont upon their ſolemn days to meet together for Divine worſhip, and*

Plin. Epiſt. l. x. ep. 97.

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and to covenant with each other only for the practice of thoſe things which were as much for the good of mankind as their own, viz. that they would not wrong and defraud others, as to their bodies or eſtates. And Tertullian approves of the law againſt factions, as *de providentia & modeſtia publica, ne civitas in partes ſcinderetur*, as wiſely intended to prevent ſeditions, but withal pleads, that the ſociety of Chriſtians could not be reckoned *inter illicitas factiones*; for, ſaith he, *hæc coitio Chriſtianorum merito ſane illicita, ſi illicitis par; merito damnanda ſi quis de ea queritur eo titulo quo de factionibus querela eſt. In cujus perniciem aliquando convenimus? Hoc ſumus congregati quod & diſperſi; hoc univerſi quod & ſinguli; neminem lædentes, neminem contriſtantes; quum probi, quum boni coeunt, quum pii, quum caſti congregantur, non eſt factio dicenda, ſed curia. If,* ſaith he, *the ſocieties of Chriſtians were like others, there might be ſome reaſon to condemn them under the head of factions; but as long as we meet together for no man's injury, that, whether divided or aſſembled, we are ſtill the ſame, that we grieve and injure no body; when ſuch a company of good men meet together, it is rather a council than a faction.* Tertullian. Apol. c. 38. Id. c. 39.

2. Another law the Chriſtians were brought under, was, that againſt innovations in religion: thence it was laid ſo much to the charge of the Chriſtians, that they did ζῆν παρανόμως *go contrary to the eſtabliſhed law*; as Porphyry ſaid of Origen, becauſe he was a Chriſtian, he did χριστιάνως ζῆν καὶ παρανόμως; and when he ſpeaks of Ammonius revolting from Chriſtianity to Paganiſm, εὐθὺς πρὸς τὴν κατὰ νόμους πολιτείαν μετεβάλετο, *he turned to the way of life which was agreeable to the eſtabliſhed laws.* Now Chriſtianity was every where looked on as a great innovation, inſomuch that the Chriſtians were accuſed to be *legum, morum, naturæ inimici*, as *enemies to mankind as well as the laws*, becauſe they drew men off from that way of religion which mankind had generally agreed in. Thence Æmilianus, the præfect of Egypt, when he bids Euſeb l. vi. Eccleſ. Hiſt. cap. 19. Tertullian. Apol. c. 2.

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bids the Chriſtians return to Paganiſm, he uſed theſe expreſſions, ἐπὶ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν τρέπεσθαι· ἐπιλαθέσθαι δὲ τῶν παρὰ φύσιν, *to return to the common ſenſe of mankind, and to forget what was ſo much againſt it*, as he ſuppoſed Chriſtianity to be. When Paul preached at Athens, his firſt accuſation was, that *he was a preacher of ſtrange Deities, becauſe he preached to them Jeſus and the reſurrection.* And Demetrius at Epheſus knew no ſuch potent argument againſt Paul, as that his religion *deſtroyed the worſhip of Diana, whom all Aſia and the world worſhip.* So that the primitive Chriſtians were then accounted the Antipodes to the whole world, on which account they were ſo ſeverely dealt with; moſt commonwealths obſerving the counſel of Mecænas to Auguſtus in Dio, to be ſure to have a watchful eye upon all innovations in religion, becauſe they tend ſo much to the diſturbance of the civil ſtate.

Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. vii. c. 11.

Acts xvii. 18, 19, 27.

3. The law of ſacrilege. Thence Lactantius calls their laws *Conſtitutiones Sacrilegæ. Quin etiam ſceleratiſſimi homicidæ contra pios jura impia condiderunt; nam & conſtitutiones ſacrilegæ, & diſputationes juriſperitorum leguntur injuſtæ*; and, as he tells us, Domitius Ulpianus had collected all thoſe *reſcripta nefaria* together, which concerned the Chriſtians; from hence it was Chriſtianity, by Pliny, is called *amentia*; by Tacitus, *exitiabilis ſuperſtitio*; by Suetonius, *ſuperſtitio nova & malefica*; ſo much did theſe three great men agree in condemning the beſt religion in the world for madneſs, and new and deteſtable ſuperſtition: the ground of the great pique was, the enmity declared by Chriſtians againſt the idolatrous temples and worſhip of the Heathens.

Lactant. l. v. c. 11. Ed. Oxon.

Tacit. An. l. xv. c. 44. Sueton. in Nerone, c. 16. Plin. Ep. l. x. ep. 97.

4. The law againſt treaſon; for ſometimes they proceeded ſo high, as to accuſe the Chriſtians *læſæ majeſtatis*; and thence they are commonly called *publici hoſtes, enemies to all civil government.* Which they inferred from hence: 1. *Becauſe they would not ſacrifice for the Emperor's ſafety. Ideo committimus*, ſaith Tertullian,

Tertull. Apol. c. 28, 35.

Ibid. c. 29.

Tertullian, *in majeſtatem imperatorum, quia illos non ſubjicimus rebus ſuis; quia non ludimus de officio ſalutis eorum, qui eam non putamus in manibus eſſe plumbatis.* The accuſation for treaſon lay in their refuſing to ſupplicate the idols for the Emperor's welfare. 2. *Becauſe they would not ſwear by the Emperor's genius.* Thence Saturnius ſaid to the Martyr, *Tantum jura per genium Cæſaris noſtri*; if he would but ſwear by the genius of Cæſar, he ſhould be ſaved. Yet though they refuſed to ſwear by the Emperor's genius, they did not refuſe to teſtify their allegiance, and to ſwear by the Emperor's ſafety. *Sed & juramus*, ſaith Tertullian, *ſicut non per genios Cæſarum, ita per ſalutem eorum, quæ eſt auguſtior omnibus geniis.* 3. *Becauſe they would not worſhip the Emperors as Gods*; which was then grown a common cuſtom. *Non enim Deum Imperatorem dicam, vel quia mentiri neſcio, vel quia illum deridere non audeo, vel quia nec ipſe ſe Deum volet dici, ſi homo ſit*, as the ſame author ſpeaks. Nay, the primitive Chriſtians were very ſcrupulous of calling the Emperor *Dominus, hoc enim Dei eſt cognomen*, becauſe the name Lord was an attribute of God's, and applied as his name to him in Scripture. The reaſon of this ſcrupuloſity was not from any queſtion they made of the ſovereignty of Princes, or their obligation to obedience to them (which they are very free in the acknowledgment of), but from a jealouſy and juſt ſuſpicion that ſomething of Divine honour might be implied in it, when the adoration of Princes was grown a cuſtom; therefore Tertullian, to prevent miſunderſtandings, ſaith, *Dicam plane Imperatorem Dominum, ſed more communi, ſed quando non cogor ut Dominum Dei vice dicam.* They refuſed not the name in a common ſenſe, but as it implied Divine honour.

Herald. in Tertull. Apol. c. 29.

Tertullian. Apol. c. 32.

Ibid. c. 33.

Ibid. c. 34.

5. *Becauſe they would not obſerve the public feſtivals* of the Emperors in the way that others did, which it ſeems were obſerved with abundance of looſeneſs and debauchery by all ſorts of perſons; and, as Tertullian ſmartly ſays, *Malorum morum licentia pietas erit*;

Ibid. c. 35.

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erit; *& occaſio luxuriæ religio deputabitur? Debauchery is accounted a piece of loyalty, and intemperance a part of religion*; which made the Chriſtians rather hazard the reputation of their loyalty, than bear a part in ſo much rudeneſs as was then uſed; and thence they abhorred all the ſolemn ſpectacles of the Romans.

Tertull. c. 38. *Nihil eſt nobis*, ſaith the ſame author, *dictu, viſu, auditu, cum inſania circi, cum impudicitia theatri, cum atrocitate arenæ, cum xyſti vanitate. They had nothing to do either with the madneſs of the cirque, or the immodeſty of the theatre, or the cruelty of the amphitheatre, or the vanity of the public wreſtlings.* We ſee then what a hard province the Chriſtians had, when ſo many laws were laid as bird-lime in their way to catch them, that it was impoſſible for them to profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, and not to run into a *præmunire* by their laws. And therefore it cannot be conceived that many out of affection of novelty ſhould then declare themſelves Chriſtians, when ſo great hazards were run upon the profeſſing of it. Few ſoft-ſpirited men, and lovers of their own eaſe, but would have found ſome fine diſtinctions and nice evacuations to have reconciled themſelves to the public laws, by ſuch things which the primitive Chriſtians ſo unanimouſly refuſed, when tending to profaneneſs or idolatry. And from this diſcourſe we cannot but conclude

2 Cor. x. 4, 5. with the Apoſtle Paul, *that the weapons* whereby the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians *encountered the Heathen world, were not fleſhly or weak*, but exceeding ſtrong and powerful; in that they obtained ſo great a conqueſt over the imaginations and carnal reaſonings of men (which were their ſtrong holds they ſecured themſelves in), as to make them readily to forſake their Heathen worſhip, and become cheerful ſervants to Chriſt. Thus we ſee the power of the doctrine of Chriſt, which prevailed over the principles of education, though backed with pretended antiquity, univerſality, and eſtabliſhment by civil laws.

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But this will further appear, if we conſider that not only the matters of faith were contrary to the principles of education, but becauſe many of them ſeemed incredible to men's natural reaſon, that we cannot think perſons would be over-forward to believe ſuch things; every one being ſo ready to take any advantage againſt a religion which did ſo little flatter corrupt nature, either as to its power or capacity, inſomuch that thoſe who preached this doctrine, declared openly to the world, that ſuch perſons, who would judge of the Chriſtian doctrine by ſuch principles which mere natural reaſon did proceed upon (ſuch one I ſuppoſe it is whom the Apoſtle calls ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, one that owned nothing but natural reaſon whereby to judge of Divine truths), could not entertain matters of faith or of Divine revelation, becauſe ſuch things would ſeem but folly to him that owned no higher principle than philoſophy, or that did not believe any Divine inſpiration; neither can ſuch a one know them, becauſe a Divine revelation is the only way to come to a thorough underſtanding of them; and a perſon who doth not believe ſuch a Divine revelation, it is impoſſible he ſhould be a competent judge of the truth of the doctrine of Chriſt. So that the only ground of receiving the doctrine of the Goſpel is upon a Divine revelation, that God himſelf, by his Son and his Apoſtles, hath revealed theſe deep myſteries to the world; on which account it is we are bound to receive them, although they go beyond our reach and comprehenſion. But we ſee generally in the Heathen world how few of thoſe did believe the doctrine of Chriſt in compariſon, who were the great admirers of the philoſophy and way of learning which was then cried up: the reaſon was, becauſe Chriſtianity not only contained far deeper myſteries than any they were acquainted with, but delivered them in ſuch a way of authority; commanding them to believe the doctrine they preached, on the account of the Divine

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1 Cor. ii. 14.

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authority of the revealers of it. Such a way of propoſal of doctrines to the world the philoſophy of the Greeks was unacquainted with, which on that account they derided, as not being ſuited to the exact method which their ſciences proceeded in. No doubt, had the Apoſtles come among the Greeks μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, with a *great deal of pomp and oſtentation*, and had fed men's curioſities with vain and unneceſſary ſpeculations, they might have had as many followers among the Greeks for their ſakes, as Chriſt had among the Jews for the ſake of the loaves. But the matters of the Goſpel being more of inward worth and moment than of outward pomp and ſhow, the vain and empty Greeks preſently find a quarrel with the manner of propoſing them; that they came not in a way of clear demonſtration, but ſtood ſo much upon faith as ſoon as they were delivered. Thence Celſus and Galen think they have reaſon enough to reject the laws of Moſes and Chriſt; becauſe Celſus calls them νόμους ἀναποδείκτως, Galen, Chriſtianity διατριβὴν ἀναπόδεικτον, that they were ſuch doctrines which require faith and obedience, without giving men's reaſon an account of the things commanded: as though the authority of a legiſlator, ſufficiently manifeſted, were not enough to enforce a law, unleſs a ſufficient account were given of the thing required to the purblind reaſon of every individual perſon, acted by paſſions and private intereſts, as to the juſtice and equity of it. And ſo the primary obligation on man's part to faith and obedience, muſt ariſe not from the evidence of Divine authority, but of the thing itſelf which is revealed, to the moſt partial judgment of every one to whom it is propoſed: which thoſe who know how ſhort the ſtock of reaſon is at the beſt in men, and how eaſily that which is, is faſhioned and moulded according to prejudices and intereſts already entertained, will look upon only as a deſign to comply with the carnal deſires of men, in that thereby none ſhall be bound to

Orig. cont. Celſ. l. i. Gal. de Diff. Pulſ. lib. ii. c. 4.

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go any further than this blind and corrupted guide shall lead them. Now these being the terms on which the Gospel of Christ must have expected entertainment in the Gentile world, how impossible had it been ever to have found any success among men, had there not been sufficient evidence given by a power of miracles, that, however strange and incredible the doctrine might seem, yet it was to be believed, because there was sufficient means to convince men that it was of Divine revelation. CHAP. IX.

Neither were the matters of faith only contrary to the inclinations of the world, but so were the precepts of life, or those things in Christianity which concerned practice. There are two things which are the main scope and design of Christianity in reference to men's lives, to take them off from their sins, and from the world; and of all things these are they which men's hearts are so bewitched with. Now the precepts of the Gospel are such which require the greatest *purity of heart and life*, which call upon men *to deny themselves, and all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world*; that *all that name the name of Christ must depart from iniquity*; that *all true Christians must be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and must perfect holiness in the fear of God.* And the Gospel enforceth these precepts of holiness with the most terrible denunciations of the wrath of God on those who disobey them; that *the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ:* that *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness:* that no persons who live in the habitual practice of any known sin *shall inherit the kingdom of God:* that *no man should deceive them with vain words, for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience;* XXIII. Matt. v. 8, 16, 24. Tit. ii. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. Rom. i. 18. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. iv. 20. Ephes. v. 5, 6.

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ence; that men do but vainly flatter themſelves, when they ſeek to reconcile unholy lives with the hopes of future happineſs; for *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* And then, in reference to the things of this preſent life, which men buſy themſelves ſo much about, the Goſpel declares, that *they who love this world, the love of the Father is not in them*; that *the friendſhip of this world is enmity with God*; *and whoſoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy to God:* that *Chriſtians muſt not ſet their affections on earth, but on the things in heaven*; that *the converſation of true Chriſtians is in heaven:* that we ought not to *lay up our treaſure on earth, but in heaven*; that *we muſt not look at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.* Now the whole deſign of the doctrine of Chriſt being to perſuade men to lead a holy and heavenly life while they are in this world, and thereby to *be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the ſaints in light*, can we think ſo many men, whoſe hearts were wedded to ſin and the world, could ſo ſuddenly be brought off from both without a Divine power accompanying that doctrine which was preached to them? And therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, οὐκ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt*; i. e. though the Goſpel of Chriſt be the only true myſtery, yet I do not by it as the Heathens are wont to do with their famous Eleuſinian myſteries, which were kept ſo ſecret by all the *myſtæ* and ἐπόπται; but, ſaith he, *I know no reaſon I have to be aſhamed of any thing in the Goſpel, that I ſhould labour its concealment to advance its veneration*; but the more public the Goſpel is, the more it manifeſts its power; for through it God is pleaſed mightily to work, in order to the ſalvation both of Jew and Gentile. And of all the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, that upon the hearts and lives of men deſerves the greateſt conſideration.

Heb. xii. 14.

1 John ii. 14.

Jam. iv. 4.

Col. iii. 1, 2.

Phil. iii. 20.

Matt. vi. 20.

2 Cor. iv. 18.

Col. i. 12.

Rom. i. 16.

The

CHAP. IX.

The great efficacy and power of the Gospel was abundantly seen in that great alteration which it wrought in all those who were the hearty embracers of it. The philosophers did very frequently and deservedly complain of the great inefficacy of all their moral precepts upon the minds of men, and that by all their instructions, *politiora non meliora, ingenia fiunt*, men improved more in knowledge than goodness; but now Christianity not only enforced duties on men with greater power and authority: for the Scriptures do, as Saint Austin speaks, *Non tanquam ex philosophorum concertationibus strepere, sed tanquam ex oraculis & Dei nubibus intonare*, not make some obstreperous clamours, like those *tinkling cymbals* the philosophers, but awe the souls of men with the majesty of that God from whom they came. Neither was it only a great and empty sound which was heard in the preaching of the Gospel; but when God thundered therein, he broke down the *stately cedars*, and *shook the wilderness*, and *made the hinds to calve* (as it is said of thunder, called the *voice of the Lord* in Scripture); he humbled the pride of men, unsettled the Gentile world from its former foundations, and wrought great alterations on all those who hearkened to it. The whole design of the Gospel is couched in those words, which Saint Paul tells us were spoken to him by Christ himself when he appointed him to be an Apostle, *to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which were sanctified by faith in Christ.* And the efficacy of this doctrine, in order to these great ends, was abundantly seen in the preaching of that Apostle, who was so instrumental in converting the world to piety and sobriety, as well as to the doctrine of Christ. What strange persons were the Corinthians before they became Christians! For when the Apostle had enumerated many of the vilest persons of the world, he presently adds, *And such were*

Auguſt. de Civit. Dei, l. ii. c. 19.

Pſal. xxix. 5, 8, 9.

Acts xxvi. 18.

1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

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ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God. The more dangerous the diſtemper is, the more malignant its nature; the more inveterate its continuance, the greater the efficacy of the remedy which works a cure of it. The power of grace is the more ſeen in converſion, the greater the ſins have been before it. It is an eaſy matter in compariſon to remove a diſeaſe at its firſt onſet, of what it is to cure it when it becomes chronical. The power of the Goſpel wrought upon all ſorts and kinds of perſons, to manifeſt to the world there was no diſtemper of men's ſouls ſo great, but there was a poſſibility of a remedy for it; and not only ſo, but pregnant and viſible inſtances were given of the power and efficacy of it. *For they themſelves ſhew of us*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *what manner of entering in we had among you, and how ye turned to God from idols to ſerve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, even Jeſus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* Now that which manifeſts the exceeding great power and excellency of the Goſpel, was, that it not only turned men from one way of worſhip to another, which is a matter of no great difficulty, but that it turned men together with that from their luſts and ſenſuality to a holy and unblameable life. For men being more in love with their ſins than with their opinions, it muſt needs be a greater power which draws men from the practice of habitual ſins, than that which only makes them change their opinions, or alter the way of worſhip they were brought up in. This is that which Origen, throughout his books againſt Celſus, triumphs in as the moſt ſignal evidence of a Divine power in the doctrine of Chriſt, that it wrought ſo great an alteration on all that truly embraced it; that of vicious, debauched, and diſſolute, it made them temperate, ſober, and religious, ὅτι τοσούτους ἀνθρώπους ἐπιστρέφει ἀπὸ τῆς χύσεως τῶν κακῶν, ἐπὶ

1 Theſſ. i. 9, 10.

Origen cont. Celſum, l. ii. p. 78, 85. lib. i. p. 21.

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ἐπὶ τὸν κατὰ φύσιν μετὰ σωφροσύνης καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀρετῶν βίον. *The doctrine of Chriſt did convert the moſt wicked perſons who embraced it, from all their debaucheries, to a life moſt ſuitable to nature and reaſon, and to the practice of all virtues.* Therefore certainly the Goſpel could not want that commendation among all ingenuous moraliſts, that it was the moſt excellent inſtrument in the world to reform the lives of men, and to promote real goodneſs in it, when they could not but take notice of ſo many perſons continually ſo brought off from their follies and vain converſations to a life ſerious, ſober, and unblameable; nay, and ſome of the Chriſtians were of ſo much integrity and goodneſs, that their greateſt enemies were forced to ſay, that their only fault was that they were Chriſtians. *Bonus vir Cajus Sejus, tantum quod Chriſtianus; a very good man, only a Chriſtian.* But one would think this ſhould have made them have a higher opinion of Chriſtianity, when it did ſo ſuddenly make ſo many good men in the world; eſpecially when this power was ſo manifeſt on ſuch perſons, who were ſuppoſed uncapable of being reformed by philoſophy, young, illiterate, and mean-ſpirited perſons; therefore it may be juſtly ſuppoſed that it was not by the ſtrength of their own reaſon that this alteration was wrought within them, but by that Divine Power which was able to tame the moſt unruly, to inſtruct the moſt ignorant, to raiſe up the moſt ſordid perſons to ſuch a generous temper, as to ſlight the good things of this life in compariſon with thoſe to come. And ſo remarkable was the difference of life then between thoſe who were Chriſtians and thoſe who were not (as there is ſtill between true Chriſtians and mere pretenders), that Origen dares Celſus to compare them in point of morality with any other ſocieties in the world. Origen cont. Celſum, l. iii. p. 128. Αἱ γὰρ τοῦ Θεῦ Χριστῷ μαθητευθεῖσαι ἐκκλησίαι, συνεξεταζόμεναι ταῖς ὧν παροικοῦσι δήμων ἐκκλησίαις, ὡς φωστῆρές εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ· τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσαι καὶ τὰς χείρους τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ συγκρίσει βελτιόνων ἐλάττους, πολ-

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λῶν κρείττους τυγχάνειν τῶν ἐν τοῖς δήμοις ἐκκλησιῶν ; *for the Churches of God, which are disciplined to Christ, being compared with other societies, shine among them like lights in the world. For who can but confess, that even the worser part of the Christian Churches exceeds the best of the popular assemblies ? For*, as he goes on, *the Church of God which is at Athens, that is* πραεῖά τις καὶ εὐσταθὴς, *very quiet and peaceable, because it seeks to approve itself to God ; but the popular assembly at Athens, that is* στασιώδης, *seditious and quarrelsome, and in nothing comparable to the Church of God there. So it is if we compare the Churches of Corinth and Alexandria with the assemblies of the people there.* So that any candid enquirer after truth will exceedingly wonder (how such fair islands should appear *nantes in gurgite vasto*, in the midst of such a sea of wickedness as was in those cities) how these Churches of God should be planted in such rude and profane places. So the same author goes on to compare the Church's senate with that of the cities ; the Church's officers with theirs ; and appeals to themselves, that even those among them who were most lukewarm in their office, did yet far exceed all the city magistrates in all manner of virtues. From whence he rationally con-

Id. p. 129. cludes, εἰ δὲ ταῦθ' ἕτως ἔχει, πῶς οὐκ εὔλογον μὲν νομίζειν περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοσαῦτα συστῆσαι δεδυνημένου, ὅτι οὐκ ἡ τυχοῦσα θειότης ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ ; *If these things be so, how can it but be most rational to adore the divinity of Jesus, who was able to accomplish such great things* ; and that not upon one or two, but upon such great multitudes as were then converted to the *Christian faith ?* We read of one Phædon and one Polemon brought from their debaucheries by Socrates and Xenocrates ; but what are these compared with those who were turned from

Origen. cont. Cels. l. i. p. 50. their sins to God by the Gospel of Christ ! καὶ παρὰ μὲν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, εἴς τις φαίδων καὶ οὐκ οἶδα εἰ δεύτερος, καὶ εἷς Πολέμων, μεταβαλόντες ἀπὸ ἀσώτου καὶ μοχθηροτάτου βίου, ἐφιλοσόφησαν· παρὰ δὲ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὁ μόνοι τότε οἱ δώδεκα, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ καὶ πολλαπλασίους, &c. *the twelve Apostles were but the*

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the first-fruits of that plentiful harvest of converts which followed afterwards. And although Celsus (like an Epicurean) seems to deny the possibility of any such thing as conversion, because customary sins become a second nature, that no punishments can reform them; *yet*, saith Origen, *herein he not only contradicts us Christians, but all such as were* γενναίως φιλοσοφήσαντες, *who owned any generous principles of philosophy, and did not despair of recovering virtue, as a thing feasible by human nature*; and gives instances, *ad hominem*, to prove the possibility of the thing from the ancient heroes, Hercules and Ulysses, from the two philosophers, Socrates and Musonius, and the two famous converts to philosophy, Phædon and Polemon: *but yet*, saith he, *these are not so much to be wondered at, that the eloquence and reason of the philosophers should prevail on some very few persons, but that the mean and contemptible language of the Apostles should convert such multitudes from intemperance to sobriety, from injustice to fair-dealing, from cowardice to the highest constancy, yea so great as to lay down their lives for the sake of virtue: How can we but admire so divine a power as was seen in it? And therefore*, saith he, *we conclude*, ὅτι τῷ θείῳ λόγῳ ἀμείψαι κακίαν φυσιώσασάν ἐστιν ὁ μόνον οὐκ ἀδύνατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ πανὺ χαλεπὸν, *that it is so far from being impossible, that it is not at all difficult for corrupt nature to be changed by the Word of God.* Lactantius excellently manifests, that philosophy could never do so much good in the world as Christianity did, because that was not suited at all to common capacities, and did require so much skill in the arts to prepare men for it, which it is impossible all should be well skilled in, which yet are as capable of being happy as any others are. And how inefficacious the precepts of philosophy were, appears by the philosophers themselves, who were far from having command by them over their masterless passions, and were fain sometimes to confess that nature was too headstrong to be kept in by such weak reins as the precepts of philosophy were:

Id. l. iii. p. 150.

Id. l. iii. p. 153.

Lactant. de Falf. Sap. l. iii. c. 25.

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were: *but*, ſaith he, *what great command Divine precepts have upon the ſouls of men, daily experience ſhews. Da mihi virum qui ſit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus; pauciſſimis Dei verbis, tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem; jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, & pecuniam ſuam plenis manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris ac mortis; jam cruces, & ignes, taurum contemnet. Da libidinoſum, adulterum, ganionem; jam ſobrium, caſtum, continentem videbis. Da crudelem, & ſanguinis appetentem; jam in veram clementiam furor ille mutabitur. Da injuſtum, inſipientem, peccatorem; continuo & æquus, & prudens, & innocens erit.* In which words that elegant writer doth, by a rhetorical ſcheme, ſet out the remarkable alteration which was in any who became true Chriſtians, that although they were paſſionate, covetous, fearful, luſtful, cruel, unjuſt, vicious; yet upon their being Chriſtians, they became mild, liberal, courageous, temperate, merciful, juſt, and unblameable, which never any were brought to by mere philoſophy; which rather teacheth the art of concealing vices, than of healing them. But now when Chriſtianity was ſo effectual in the cure of thoſe diſtempers, which philoſophy gave over as beyond its ſkill and power, when it cured them with ſo great ſucceſs, and that not in a Paracelſian way, for them to relapſe afterwards with greater violence, but it did ſo thoroughly unſettle the *fomes morbi*, that it ſhould never gather to ſo great a head again; doth not this argue a power more than philoſophical, and that could be no leſs than Divine power which tended ſo much to reform the world, and to promote true goodneſs in it?

XXIV. Thus we have conſidered the contrariety of the doctrine of Chriſt to men's natural inclinations, and yet the ſtrange ſucceſs it had in the world, which in the laſt place will appear yet more ſtrange, when we add the almoſt *continual oppoſition it met with from worldly power and policy*. Had it been poſſible for a cunningly-deviſed fable, or any mere contrivance of impoſtors,

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impoſtors, to have prevailed in the world, when the moſt potent and ſubtle perſons bent their whole wits and deſigns for ſuppreſſing it? Whatever it were in others, we are ſure of ſome of the Roman Emperors, as Julian and Diocleſian, that it was their maſter-deſign to root out and aboliſh Chriſtianity; and was it only the ſubtlety of the Chriſtians which made theſe perſons give over their work in deſpair of accompliſhing it? If the Chriſtians were ſuch ſubtle men, whence came all their enemies to agree in one common calumny, that they were a company of poor, weak, ignorant, inconſiderable men? And if they were ſo, how came it to paſs that by their power and wiſdom they could never exterminate theſe perſons, but as they cut them down they grew up the faſter, and multiplied by their ſubtraction of them? There was ſomething then certainly peculiar in Chriſtianity from all other doctrines, that it not only was not advanced by any civil power, but it got ground by the oppoſition it met with in the world. And therefore it is an obſervable circumſtance, that the firſt Chriſtian Emperor (who acted as Emperor for Chriſtianity), viz. Conſtantine (for otherwiſe I know what may be ſaid for Philippus), did not appear in the world till Chriſtianity had ſpread itſelf over moſt parts of the habitable world; God thereby letting us ſee, that though the civil power, when become Chriſtian, might be very uſeful for protecting Chriſtianity, yet that he ſtood in no need at all of it as to the propagation of it abroad in the world. But we ſee it was quite otherwiſe in that religion which had Mars its aſcendant, viz. Mahometiſm, for, like Paracelſus's dæmon, it always ſate upon the pummel of the ſword, and made its way in the world merely by force and violence; and as its firſt conſtitution had much of blood in it, ſo by it hath it been fed and nouriſhed ever ſince. But it was quite otherwiſe with the Chriſtian religion: it never thrived better than in the moſt barren places, nor triumphed more

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more than when it ſuffered moſt; nor ſpread itſelf further than when it encountered the greateſt oppoſition: becauſe therein was ſeen the great force and efficacy of the doctrine of Chriſt, that it bore up men's ſpirits under the greateſt miſeries of life, and made them with cheerfulneſs to undergo the moſt exquiſite torments which the cruelty of tyrants could invent. The Stoics and Epicureans boaſts, that their wiſe man would be happy in the Bull of Phalaris, were but empty and Thraſonical words, which none would venture the truth of by an experiment upon themſelves. It was the Chriſtian alone, and not the Epicurean, that could truly ſay in the midſt of torments, *Suave eſt & nihil curo*, and might juſtly alter a little of that common ſaying of the Chriſtians, and ſay, *Non magna loquimur, ſed patimur*, as well as *vivimus*; *the Chriſtians did not ſpeak great things, but do and ſuffer them.* And this gained not only great reputation of integrity to themſelves, but much advanced the honour of their religion in the world, when it was ſo apparently ſeen that no force or power was able to withſtand it. Will not this at leaſt perſuade you that our religion is true, and from God? ſaith Arnobius: *Quod cum genera pœnarum tanta ſint a vobis propoſita religionis hujus ſequentibus leges, augeatur res magis, & contra omnes minas atque interdicta formidinum animoſius populus obnitatur, & ad credendi ſtudium, prohibitionis ipſius ſtimulis excitetur?——Itane iſtud non divinum & ſacrum eſt, aut ſine Deo, eorum tantas animorum fieri converſiones, ut cum carnifices unci, aliique innumeri cruciatus, quemadmodum diximus, impendeant credituris, veluti quadam dulcedine, atque omnium virtutum amore correpti, cognitas accipiant rationes, atque mundi omnibus rebus præponant amicitias Chriſti; that no fears, penalties, or torments, were able to make a Chriſtian alter his profeſſion, but he would rather bid adieu to his life than to his Saviour.* This Origen likewiſe frequently takes notice of, when Celſus had objected the novelty of Chriſtianity. *The more wonder-*

Arnob. l. ii. p. 45. cont. Gentes.

Origen cont. Celſ. l. i. p. 22. Vid. etiam, ii. p. 110.

ful

ful it is (faith Origen) *that in ſo ſhort a time it ſhould ſo largely ſpread itſelf in the world; for if the cure of men's bodies be not wrought without Divine Providence, how much leſs the cure of ſo many thouſands of ſouls, which have been converted at once to humanity and Chriſtianity, eſpecially when all the powers of the world were from the firſt engaged to hinder the progreſs of this doctrine; and yet, notwithſtanding all this oppoſition,* ἐνίκησε, μὴ πεφυκὼς κωλύεσθαι, ὡς λόγος Θεοῦ, καὶ γενόμενος τοσάτων ἀνταγονιςῶν ἰσχυρότερος, πάσης μὲν Ἑλλάδος, ἐπὶ πλεῖον δὲ τῆς βαρβάρου ἐκράτησε, καὶ μετεποίησε μυρίας ὅσας ψυχὰς ἐπὶ τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν θεοσέβειαν. *The Word of God prevailed, as not being able to be ſtopped by men, and became maſter over all its enemies, and not only ſpread itſelf quite through Greece, but through a great part of the world beſides, and converted an innumerable company of ſouls to the true worſhip and ſervice of God.* Thus we have now manifeſted, from all the circumſtances of the propagation of the doctrine of Chriſt, what evidence there was of a Divine power accompanying of it, and how uſeful the firſt miracles were in order to it.

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CHAP. X.

The Difference of true Miracles from falſe.

I. *The Unreaſonableneſs of rejecting the Evidence from Miracles, becauſe of Impoſtors. That there are certain Rules of diſtinguiſhing true Miracles from falſe, and divine from diabolical, proved from God's Intention in giving a Power of Miracles, and the Providence of God in the World.* II. *The Inconvenience of taking away the rational Grounds of Faith, and placing it on Self-evidence. Of the Self-evidence of the Scriptures, and the Inſufficiency of that for reſolving the Queſtion about the Authority of the Scriptures.* III. *Of the pretended Miracles of Impoſtors and falſe Chriſts;* as Barchochebas, David *el*-David, *and others.* IV. *The Rules whereby to judge true Miracles from falſe.* 1. *True Divine Miracles are wrought to confirm a Divine Teſtimony.* V. *No Miracles neceſſary for the certain Conveyance of a Divine Teſtimony: proved from the Evidences that the Scriptures could not be corrupted.* VI. 2. *No Miracles divine which contradict Divine Revelation. Of Popiſh Miracles.* VII. 3. *Divine Miracles leave Divine Effects on thoſe who believe them. Of the Miracles of* Simon Magus. VIII. 4. *Divine Miracles tend to the Overthrow of the Devil's Power in the World: the Antipathy of the Doctrine of Chriſt to the Devil's Deſign in the World.* IX. 5. *The Diſtinction of true Miracles from others, from the Circumſtances and Manner of their Operation. The Miracles of Chriſt compared with thoſe of the Heathen Gods.* X. 6. *God makes it evident to all impartial Judgments, that Divine Miracles exceed created Power. This manifeſted from the unparalleled Miracles of* Moſes *and our Saviour. From all which the rational Evidence of Divine Revelation is manifeſted,*

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feſted, as to the Perſons whom God employs to teach the World. CHAP. X.

I. HAVING thus far ſtated the caſes wherein miracles may juſtly be expected as a rational evidence of Divine authority in the perſons whom God employs by way of peculiar meſſage to the world, and in the proſecution of this diſcourſe manifeſted the evidences of Divine authority in Moſes and the prophets, and in our Saviour and his Apoſtles; the only remaining queſtion concerning this ſubject, is, *How we may certainly diſtinguiſh true and real miracles from ſuch as are only pretended and counterfeit?* For it being as evident that there have been impoſtures and deluſions in the world as real miracles, the minds of men will be wholly to ſeek when to rely upon the evidence of miracles as an argument of Divine authority in thoſe perſons who do them, unleſs a way be found out to diſtinguiſh them from each other. But if we can make it appear, that, unleſs men through weakneſs of judgment or incogitancy deceive themſelves, they may have certain evidence of the truth of miracles, then there can be nothing wanting as to the eſtabliſhment of their minds in the truth of that doctrine which is confirmed by them. There hath been nothing which hath made men of better affections than underſtandings, ſo ready to ſuſpect the ſtrength of the evidence from miracles concerning Divine teſtimony, as the multitude of impoſtures in the world under the name of miracles, and that the Scripture itſelf tells us we muſt not hearken to ſuch as come with lying wonders. But may we not therefore ſafely rely on ſuch miracles, which we have certain evidence could not be wrought but by Divine power, becauſe forſooth the Devil may ſometimes abuſe the ignorance and credulity of unwary men? Or is it becauſe the Scripture forbids us to believe ſuch as ſhould come with a pretence of miracles, therefore we cannot rely on the

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the miracles of Chriſt himſelf? Which is as much as to ſay, becauſe the Scripture tells us that we muſt not believe every ſpirit, therefore we muſt believe none at all; or becauſe we muſt not entertain any other doctrine beſide the Goſpel, therefore we have no reaſon to believe that. For the ground whereby we are aſſured by the Scriptures that the teſtimony of Chriſt was divine, and therefore his doctrine true, is becauſe it was confirmed by ſuch miracles as he did; now if that argument were inſufficient, which the Scriptures tell us was the great evidence of Chriſt's being ſent from God, we cannot give ourſelves a ſufficient account in point of evidence, on which we believe the doctrine of the Goſpel to be true and divine. But the only rational pretence of any ſcruple in this caſe, muſt be a ſuppoſed uncertainty in our rules of judging concerning the nature of miracles; for if there be no certain κριτήρια, or notes of difference, whereby to know Divine miracles from deluſions of ſenſes and the impoſtures of the Devil, I muſt confeſs, that there is an apparent inſufficiency in the evidence from miracles: but if there be any certain rules of proceeding in this caſe, we are to blame nothing but our incredulity, if we be not ſatisfied by them. For the full clearing of this, I ſhall firſt *make it appear that there may be certain evidence found out whereby we may know true miracles from falſe, and divine from diabolical*; and, ſecondly, *enquire into thoſe things which are the main notes of difference between them.* Firſt, *That there may be certain evidence whereby to know the truth of miracles.* I ſpeak not of the difference, *ex parte rei*, between miracles and thoſe called wonders, as that the one exceeds the power of created agents, and the other doth not; for this leaves the enquirer as far to ſeek for ſatisfaction as ever; for granting that a Divine power is ſeen in one, and not in the other, he muſt needs be ſtill diſſatisfied, unleſs it can be made evident to him, that ſuch things are from Divine power, and others

others cannot be. Now the main distinction being placed here in the natures of the things abstractedly considered, and not as they bear any evidence to our understandings, instead of resolving doubts, it increaseth more; for, as for instance, in the case of the magicians' rods turning into serpents as well as Moses's, what satisfaction could this yield to any spectator, to tell him, that in the one there was a Divine power, and not in the other, unless it were made appear by some evidence from the thing, that the one was a mere imposture, and the other a real alteration in the thing itself? I take it then for granted, that no general discourses, concerning the formal difference of miracles and wonders considered in themselves, can afford any rational satisfaction to an inquisitive mind; that which alone is able to give it, must be something which may be discerned by any judicious and considerative person. And that God never gives to any a power of miracles, but he gives some such ground of satisfaction concerning them, will appear upon these two considerations.

1. *From God's intention in giving to any this power of doing miracles.* We have largely made it manifest that the end of true miracles is to be a confirmation to the world of the Divine commission of the persons who have it, and that the testimony is Divine which is confirmed by it. Now if there be no way to know when miracles are true or false, this power is to no purpose at all; for men are as much to seek for satisfaction, as if there had been no such things at all. Therefore if men are bound to believe a Divine testimony, and to rely on the miracles wrought by the persons bringing it, as an evidence of it they must have some assurance that these miracles could not come from any but a Divine power.

2. *From the providence of God in the world*; which if we own, we cannot imagine that God should permit the Devil, whose only design is to ruin mankind, to abuse the credulity of the world so far, as to have

BOOK II. his lying wonders pass uncontrolled; which they must do, if nothing can be found out as a certain difference between such things as are only of diabolical, and such as are of Divine power. If then it may be discovered that there is a malignant spirit which acts in the world, and doth produce strange things, either we must impute all strange things to him, which must be to attribute to him an infinite power, or else that there is a Being infinitely perfect, which crosseth this malignant spirit in his designs; and if so, we cannot imagine he should suffer him to usurp so much tyranny over the minds of men, as to make those things pass in the more sober and inquisitive part of the world for Divine miracles, which were only counterfeits and impostures. If then the providence of God be so deeply engaged in the discovering the designs of Satan, there must be some means of this discovery; and that means can be supposed to be no other in this case, but some rational and satisfactory evidence, whereby we may know when strange and miraculous things are done by Satan to deceive men, and when by a Divine power to confirm a Divine testimony.

II. But how is it possible, say some, that miracles should be any ground on which to believe a testimony divine, when Christ himself hath told us, *that there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect?* And the Apostle tells us, *that the coming of Antichrist will be with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.* How then can we fix on miracles as an evidence of Divine testimony, when we see they are common to good and bad men, and may seal indifferently either truth or falsehood? To this I reply,

Matt. xxiv. 24.

2 Thess. ii. 9.

1. Men are guilty of doing no small disservice to the doctrine of Christ, when upon such weak and frivolous pretences they give so great an advantage to infidelity, as to call in question the validity of that which

which yielded ſo ample a teſtimony to the truth of Chriſtian religion. For if once the rational grounds, on which we believe the doctrine of Chriſt to be true and divine, be taken away, and the whole evidence of the truth of it be laid on things not only derided by men of atheiſtical ſpirits, but in themſelves ſuch as cannot be diſcerned or judged of by any but themſelves, upon what grounds can we proceed to convince an unbeliever that the doctrine which we believe is true? If they tell him, *that as light and fire manifeſt themſelves, ſo doth the doctrine of the Scripture* to thoſe who believe it; it will be ſoon replied, that ſelf-evidence in a matter of faith can imply nothing but either a firm perſuaſion of the mind concerning the thing propounded, or elſe that there are ſuch clear evidences in the thing itſelf, that none who freely uſe their reaſon can deny it. The firſt can be no argument to any other perſon, any further than the authority of the perſon, who declares it to have ſuch ſelf-evidence to him, doth extend itſelf over the mind of the other; and to one's ſelf it ſeems a ſtrange way of arguing, *I believe the Scriptures becauſe they are true, and they are true becauſe I believe them*; for ſelf-evidence implies ſo much, if by it be meant the perſuaſion of the mind that the thing is true: but if by ſelf-evidence be further meant ſuch clear evidence in the matter propounded, that all who do conſider it muſt believe it, I then further enquire, whether this evidence doth lie in the naked propoſal of the things to the underſtanding; and if ſo, then every one who aſſents to this propoſition, that the whole is greater than the part, muſt likewiſe aſſent to this, that the Scripture is the word of God; or whether doth the evidence lie, not in the naked propoſal, but in the efficacy of the Spirit of God on the minds of thoſe to whom it is propounded. Then, 1. The ſelf-evidence is taken off from the written word, which was the object, and removed to a quite different thing, which

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BOOK II. is the efficient cauſe. 2. Whether then any perſons, who want this efficacious operation of the Spirit of God, are or can be bound to believe the Scripture to be God's word? If they are bound, the duty muſt be propounded in ſuch a way as may be ſufficient to convince them that it is their duty; but if all the evidence of the truth of the Scripture lie on this teſtimony of the Spirit, then ſuch as want this can have none at all. But if, laſtly, by this ſelf-evidence be meant ſuch an impreſs of God's authority on the Scriptures, that any who conſider them as they ought, cannot but diſcern, I ſtill further enquire, whether this impreſs lies in the poſitive aſſertions in Scripture that they are from God, and that cannot be, unleſs it be made appear to be impoſſible that any writing ſhould pretend to be from God when it is not; or elſe in the written books of Scripture, and then let it be made appear that any one, merely by the evidence of the writings themſelves, without any further arguments, can pronounce the Proverbs to be the word of God, and not the book of Wiſdom; and Eccleſiaſtes to be divinely inſpired, and not Eccleſiaſticus; or elſe the ſelf-evidence muſt be in the excellency of the matters which are revealed in Scripture: but this ſtill falls very ſhort of reſolving wholly the queſtion, whether *the Scripture be the word of God?* For the utmoſt that this can reach to is, that the things contained in Scripture are of ſo high and excellent a nature, that we cannot conceive that any other ſhould be the author of them but God himſelf. All which being granted, I am as far to ſeek as ever what grounds I have to believe that thoſe particular writings, which we call the Scripture, are the word of God, or that God did immediately employ ſuch and ſuch perſons to write ſuch and ſuch books. For I may believe the ſubſtance of the doctrine to be of God, and yet not believe the books wherein it is contained to be a Divine

vine and infallible teſtimony; as is evident in the many excellent devotional books which are in the world.

But yet further: if the only ground on which we are to believe a doctrine divine, be the ſelf-evidencing light and power of it, then I ſuppoſe there was the ſame ground of believing a Divine teſtimony, when the doctrine was declared, without writing, by the firſt preachers of it. So that by this method of proceeding, the ground of believing Chriſt to be ſent as the Meſſias ſent from God, muſt be wholly and ſolely reſolved into this, that there was ſo much ſelf-evidence in this propoſition uttered by Chriſt, *I am the light of the world*, that all the Jews had been bound to have believed him ſent from God (for light manifeſts itſelf), although our Saviour had never done any one miracle to make it appear that he came from God. And we cannot but charge our Saviour, on this account, with being at a very unneceſſary expence upon the world in doing ſo many miracles, when the bare naked affirmation that he was the Meſſias had been ſufficient to have convinced the whole world. But is it conceivable, then, upon what account our Saviour ſhould lay ſo much force on the miracles done by himſelf, in order to the proving his teſtimony to be divine, that he ſaith himſelf, *that he had a greater witneſs than that of John* (who yet doubtleſs had ſelf-evidencing light going along with his doctrine too); *for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh; the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me that the Father hath ſent me.* Can any thing be more plain, or have greater ſelf-evidence in it, than that our Saviour in theſe words doth lay the evidence of his Divine teſtimony upon the miracles which he wrought, which on that account he ſo often appeals to, on this very reaſon, *becauſe they bear witneſs of him; and if they would not believe him on his own teſtimony, yet they ought to believe him for his works ſake?* Doth all this now amount only to a removing

John v. 36.

John x. 25, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24.

BOOK II. of prejudices from the perſon of Chriſt? which yet, according to the tenor of the objection we are conſidering of, it is impoſſible the power of miracles ſhould do, if theſe miracles may be ſo far done or counterfeited by falſe Chriſts, that we can have no certain evidence to diſtinguiſh the one from the other.

III. Which the objection pretends; and was the great thing wherein Celſus the Epicurean triumphed ſo much, that *Chriſt ſhould foretell that others ſhould come and do miracles which they muſt not hearken to*; and thence would infer, as from Chriſt's own confeſſion, that miracles have in them οὐδὲν θεῖον, *nothing divine but what may be done by wicked men*: πῶς ἔν οὐ σχέτλιον ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔργων τὸν μὲν θεὸν, τὰς δὲ, γόητας ἡγεῖσθαι; *Is it not a wretched thing*, ſaith he, *that from the ſame works one ſhould be accounted a God, and others deceivers?* Whereby thoſe who would invalidate the argument from miracles, may take notice how finely they fall in with one of the moſt bitter enemies of Chriſtian religion, and make uſe of the ſame arguments which he did; and therefore Origen's reply to him will reach them too. *For*, ſaith he, *our Saviour, in thoſe words of his, doth not bid men beware in general of ſuch as did miracles*, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶ τοῖς ἀναγορεύουσιν ἑαυτὸς εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν τῶ Θεῶ, καὶ πειρωμένοις διὰ τινῶν φαντασιῶν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς ἐπιστρέφειν τοὺς Ἰησοῦ μαθητάς· *but bids them beware of that when men gave themſelves out to be the true Chriſt the Son of God, and endeavour to draw Chriſt's diſciples from him, by ſome mere appearances inſtead of miracles.* Therefore Chriſt being evidently made appear to be the Son of God, by the powerful and uncontrolled miracles which he wrought, what pretence of reaſon could there be to hearken to any who gave themſelves out to be Chriſts, merely from ſome ſtrange wonders which they wrought? And from hence, as he further obſerves, may be juſtly inferred, contrary to what Celſus imagined, that there was certainly an evidence of Divine Power in miracles, when theſe falſe Chriſts gave themſelves out

Origen cont. Celſ. lib. ii. p. 93.

to

to be Chriſts, merely from the ſuppoſal that they had this power of doing miracles. And ſo it is evident in all the falſe Chriſts which have appeared, they have made this their great pretence, that they did many ſigns and wonders; which God might juſtly permit them to do, to puniſh the great infidelity of the Jews, who would not believe in Chriſt, notwithſtanding thoſe frequent and apparent miracles which he did, which did infinitely tranſcend thoſe of any ſuch pretenders. Such among the Jews were Jonathas, who after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, as Joſephus tells us, drew many of the people into the wilderneſs of Cyrene, σημεῖα καὶ φάσματα δείξειν ὑπισχνέμενος, *promiſing to ſhew them many prodigies and ſtrange appearances.* Not long after, in the times of Adrian, appeared that famous blazing ſtar, Barchochebas, who not only portended, but brought ſo much miſchief upon the Jews. His pretence was, that he vomited flames; and ſo he did, ſuch as conſumed himſelf and his followers. After him many other impoſtors aroſe in Egypt, Cyprus, and Crete; who all went upon the ſame pretence of doing miracles. In latter times, the famous impoſtor was David el-David; whoſe ſtory is thus briefly reported by David Ganz: *David el-David pretended to be the true Meſſias, and rebelled againſt the king of Perſia; and did many ſigns and prodigies before the Jews and the king of Perſia. At laſt his head was cut off, and the Jews fined an hundred talents of gold.* In the epiſtle of Rambam, or R. Moſes Maimon. it is ſaid, *that the king of Perſia deſired of him a ſign; and he told him that he ſhould cut off his head, and he would riſe again* (which he cunningly deſired, to avoid being tormented); *which the king was reſolved to try, and accordingly executed him:* but I ſuppoſe his reſurrection and Mahomet's will be both in one day; although Maimonides tells us *ſome of the Jews are yet ſuch fools as to expect his reſurrection.* Several other impoſtors Maimonides mentions in his Epiſtle de Auſtrali Regione. One,

Tzemach David, n. 895.

V. Ep. Maimon. in Not. Vorſtii & Tzem. Dav.

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who pretended to be the Meſſias, becauſe he cured himſelf of the leproſy in a night. Several others he mentions in Spain, France, and other parts; and the iſſue of them all was only a further aggravation of the miſeries and captivities of the poor Jews, who were ſo credulous in following impoſtors; and yet ſuch ſtrange infidels where there were plain and undoubted miracles to perſuade them to believe in our bleſſed Saviour as the true Meſſias. We freely grant, then, that many pretended miracles may be done in the world, to deceive men with; but doth it hence follow, that either there are no true miracles done in the world, or that there are no certain rules to diſtinguiſh the one from the other? But as Origen yet further replies to Celſus, as a wolf doth very much reſemble a dog, yet they are not of the ſame kind; nor a turtle-dove and a pigeon; ſo that which is produced by a Divine power is not of the ſame nature with that which is produced by magic: but as he argues, *Is it poſſible that there ſhould be only deceits in the world and magical operations? And can there be no true miracles at all wrought? Is human nature only capable of impoſtures? or can none work miracles but devils? Where there is a worſe, there may be a better; and ſo from the impoſtures and counterfeits we may infer that there are true miracles wrought by a Divine power; otherwiſe it were all one as to ſay there are counterfeits, but no jewels; or there are ſophiſms and paralogiſms, but no legitimate demonſtrations. If then there be ſuch deceits, there are true miracles too; all the buſineſs is* βεβασανισμένως τοὺς ἐπαγγελλομένους τὰς δυνάμεις ἐξετάζειν, *ſtrictly and ſeverely to examine the pretenders to them, and that from the life and manners of thoſe that do them, and from the effects and conſequents of them, whether they do good or hurt in the world, whether they correct men's manners, or bring men to goodneſs, holineſs, and truth; and on this account we are neither to reject all miracles, nor embrace all pretences, but carefully and prudently examine the rational evidences, whereby thoſe which are true*

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true and divine may be known from such as are counterfeit and diabolical.

And this now leads us to the main subject of this chapter, viz. *what rules we have to proceed by, in judging miracles to be true or false*; which may be these following.

1. *True Divine miracles are wrought in confirmation of some Divine testimony.* Because we have manifested by all the precedent discourse, that the intention of miracles is to seal some Divine revelation; therefore if God should work miracles when no Divine testimony is to be confirmed, God would set the broad seal of heaven to a blank. If it be said no, *because it will witness to us now the truth of that testimony which was delivered so many ages since*; I answer, 1. The truth of that testimony was sufficiently sealed at the time of the delivery of it, and is conveyed down in a certain way to us. Is it not sufficient that the charter of a corporation had the prince's broad seal in the time of the giving of it, but that every succession of men in that corporation must have a new broad seal, or else they ought to question their patent? What ground can there be for that, when the original seal and patent is preserved, and is certainly conveyed down from age to age? So, I say, it is as to us. God's grand charter of grace and mercy to the world, through Jesus Christ, was sealed by Divine miracles, at the delivery of it to the world; the original patent, viz. the Scriptures, wherein the charter is contained, is conveyed in a most certain manner to us; to this patent the seal is annexed, and in it are contained those undoubted miracles which were wrought in confirmation of it; so that a new sealing of this patent is wholly needless, unless we have some cause of suspicion that the original patent itself were lost, or the first sealing was not true. If the latter, then Christian religion is not true, if the miracles wrought for confirmation of it were false; because the truth of it depends so much on the verity and divinity of the

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the miracles which were then wrought. If the firſt be ſuſpected, viz. the certain conveyance of the patent, viz. the Scriptures, ſome certain grounds of ſuch a ſuſpicion muſt be diſcovered in a matter of ſo great moment, eſpecially when the great and many ſocieties of the Chriſtian world do all conſent unanimouſly in the contrary. Nay, it is impoſſible that any rational man can conceive that the patent which we now rely upon, is ſuppoſititious or corrupted in any of thoſe things which are of concernment to the Chriſtian world; and that on theſe accounts:

1. *From the watchfulneſs of Divine Providence for the good of mankind.* Can we conceive that there is a God who rules and takes care of the world, and who, to manifeſt his ſignal love to mankind, ſhould not only grant a patent of mercy to the world by his ſon Chriſt, and then ſealed it by Divine miracles, and, in order to the certain conveyance of it to the world, cauſed it, by perſons employed by himſelf, to be recorded in a language fitteſt for its diſperſing up and down the world (all which I here ſuppoſe); can we, I ſay, conceive that this God ſhould ſo far have caſt off his care of the world and the good of mankind, which was the original ground of the grant itſelf, as to ſuffer any wicked men, or malignant ſpirits, to corrupt or alter any of thoſe terms in it, on which men's eternal ſalvation depends, much leſs wholly to ſuppreſs and deſtroy it, and to ſend forth one that is counterfeit and ſuppoſititious inſtead of it, and which ſhould not be diſcovered by the Chriſtians of that age wherein that corrupt copy was ſet forth, nor by any of the moſt learned and inquiſitive Chriſtians ever ſince? They who can give any the leaſt entertainment to ſo wild, abſurd, and irrational an imagination, are ſo far from reaſon, that they are in good diſpoſition to atheiſm; and next to the ſuſpecting the Scriptures to be corrupted, they may rationally ſuſpect there is no ſuch thing as a God and Providence in the world, or that the world is governed

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verned by a ſpirit, moſt malignant and envious of the good of mankind; which is a ſuſpicion only becoming thoſe Heathens (among whom it was very frequent) who worſhipped the devils inſtead of God. CHAP. X.

2. *Becauſe of the general diſperſion of copies in the world upon the firſt publiſhing of them.* We cannot otherwiſe conceive, but that records, containing ſo weighty and important things, would be tranſcribed by all thoſe Churches which believe the truth of the things contained in them. We ſee how far curioſity will carry men as to the care of tranſcribing ancient MSS. of old authors, which contain only ſome hiſtory of things paſt, that are of no great concernment to us. Can we then imagine thoſe who ventured eſtates and lives upon the truth of the things revealed in Scripture, would not be very careful to preſerve the authentic inſtrument, whereby they are revealed in a certain way to the whole world? And beſides this, for a long time the originals themſelves of the apoſtolical writings were preſerved in the Church; which makes Tertullian, in his time, appeal to them. *Age jam qui voles curioſitatem melius exercere in negotio ſalutis tuæ; percurre Eccleſias Apoſtolicas, apud quas ipſæ adhuc cathedræ Apoſtolorum ſuis locis præſidentur, apud quas ipſæ authenticæ literæ eorum recitantur, ſonantes vocem, & repræſentantes faciem uniuſcujuſque.* Now how was it poſſible that in that time the Scriptures could be corrupted, when in ſome of the Churches the original writings of the Apoſtles were preſerved in a continual ſucceſſion of perſons from the Apoſtles themſelves; and from theſe originals ſo many copies were tranſcribed, as were conveyed almoſt all the world over, through the large ſpread of the Chriſtian Churches at that time? And therefore it is impoſſible to conceive that a copy ſhould be corrupted in one Church, when it would ſo ſpeedily be diſcovered by another; eſpecially conſidering theſe three circumſtances. 1. The innumerable multitude of copies which would ſpeedily be taken, both conſidering the

De Præſcript. adv. Hæret. c 36.

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3. It is impoſſible to conceive a corruption of the copy of the Scriptures, becauſe of the great differences

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ences which were all along the ſeveral ages of the Church, between thoſe who acknowledged the Scriptures to be divine; ſo that if one party of them had foiſted in, or taken out any thing, another party was ready to take notice of it, and would be ſure to tell the world of it. And this might be one great reaſon why God, in his wiſe providence, might permit ſuch an increaſe of hereſies in the infancy of the Church, viz. that thereby Chriſtians might be forced to ſtand upon their guard, and to have a ſpecial eye to the Scriptures, which were always the great eye-ſores of heretics. And from this great warineſs of the Church it was that ſome of the epiſtles were ſo long abroad before they found general entertainment in all the Churches of Chriſt; becauſe in thoſe Epiſtles, which were doubted for ſome time, there were ſome paſſages which ſeemed to favour ſome of the hereſies then abroad; but when, upon ſevere enquiry, they are found to be what they pretended, they were received in all the Chriſtian Churches. CHAP. X.

4. Becauſe of the agreement between the Old Teſtament and the New. The prophecies of the Old Teſtament appear with their full accompliſhment in the New which we have; ſo that it is impoſſible to think the New ſhould be corrupted, unleſs the Old were too, which is moſt unreaſonable to imagine, when the Jews, who have been the great conſervators of the Old Teſtament, have been all along the moſt inveterate enemies of the Chriſtians: ſo that we cannot at all conceive it poſſible that any material corruptions or alterations ſhould creep into the Scriptures, much leſs that the true copy ſhould be loſt, and a new one forged.

V. Suppoſing, then, that we have the ſame authentic records, preſerved and handed down to us by the care of all Chriſtian Churches, which were written in the firſt ages of the Church of Chriſt, what neceſſity can we imagine that God ſhould work new miracles to confirm that doctrine which is conveyed down in a certain

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certain uninterrupted way to us, as being ſealed by miracles undoubtedly divine in the firſt promulgation and penning of it? And this is the firſt reaſon why the truth of the Scriptures need not now be ſealed by new miracles. 2. Another may be, becauſe God in the Scripture hath appointed other things to continue in his Church, to be as ſeals to his people of the truth of the things contained in Scriptures. Such are, outwardly, the ſacraments of the Goſpel, Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper; which are ſet apart as ſeals to confirm the truth of the covenant on God's part towards us, in reference to the great promiſes contained in it, in reference to pardon of ſin, and the ground of our acceptance with God by Jeſus Chriſt: and inwardly, God hath promiſed his Spirit to be as a witneſs within them, that, by its working and ſtrengthening grace in the hearts of believers, it may confirm to them the truth of the records of Scripture, when they find the counter-part of them written in their hearts by the finger of the Spirit of God. It cannot then be with any reaſon at all ſuppoſed, that, when a Divine teſtimony is already confirmed by miracles undoubtedly divine, new miracles ſhould be wrought in the Church to aſſure us of the truth of it. So Chryſoſtom fully expreſſeth himſelf concerning miracles, ſpeaking of the firſt ages of the Chriſtian Church: καὶ γὰρ καὶ τότε χρησίμως ἐγίνετο, καὶ νῦν χρησίμως ἐ γίνεται, νῦν ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραφῶν καὶ τῶν τότε σημείων τὴν πίστιν ὧν λέγομεν παρεχόμεθα, *Miracles were very uſeful then, and not at all now; for now we manifeſt the truth of what we ſpeak from the ſacred Scriptures, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of them.* Which that excellent author there fully manifeſts in a diſcourſe on this ſubject: *Why miracles were neceſſary in the beginning of the Chriſtian Church, and are not now.* To the ſame purpoſe St. Auſtin ſpeaks, where he diſcourſeth of the truth of religion: *Accepimus majores noſtros viſibilia miracula ſecutos eſſe; per quos id actum eſt, ut neceſſaria non eſſent poſteris*; becauſe

Chryſoſt. in 1 Cor. ii. Hom. 6. p. 276. tom. iii. Ed. Eton.

De Ver. Relig. c. 25. Ed. Par.

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cauſe the world believed by the miracles which were wrought at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, therefore miracles are no longer neceſſary. For we cannot conceive how the world ſhould be at firſt induced to believe, without manifeſt and uncontrolled miracles. For as Chryſoſtom ſpeaks, εἰ σημείων χωρὶς ἔπεισαν, πολλῷ μεῖζον τὸ θαῦμα φαίνεται, *it was the greateſt miracle of all, if the world ſhould believe without miracles.* Which the poet Dantes hath well expreſſed in the twenty-fourth canto of Paradiſe. For when the Apoſtle is there brought in, aſking the poet upon what account he took the Scriptures of the *Old and New Teſtament to be the word of God*; his anſwer is,

Probatio quæ verum hoc mihi recludit,
Sunt opera, quæ ſecuta ſunt, ad quæ natura
Non candefecit ferrum unquam aut percuſſit incudem.

i. e. *The evidence of that is the Divine power of miracles, which was in thoſe who delivered theſe things to the world.* And when the Apoſtle catechiſeth him further, *how he knew thoſe miracles were ſuch as they pretended to be, viz. that they were true and divine*; his anſwer is,

Si orbis terræ ſeſe convertit ad Chriſtianiſmum,
Inquiebam ego, ſine miraculis: hoc unum
Eſt tale, ut reliqua non ſint ejus centeſima pars.

i. e. *If the world ſhould be converted to the Chriſtian faith without miracles, this would be ſo great a miracle, that others were not to be compared with it.* I conclude this then with that known ſaying of St. Auſtin, *Quiſquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquirit, magnum eſt ipſe prodigium qui mundo credente non credit; he that ſeeks for miracles ſtill to induce him to faith, when the world is converted to the Chriſtian faith, he needs not ſeek for prodigies abroad; he wants only a looking-glaſs to diſcover one.* For as he goes on, *Unde temporibus eruditis, & omne quod fieri non poteſt reſpuentibus, ſine ullis miraculis nimium mirabiliter incredibilia credidit mundus?* Whence

De Civit. Dei, l. xxii. cap. 8.

BOOK II. *Whence came it to paſs, that in ſo learned and wary an age as that was which the Apoſtles preached in, the world, without miracles, ſhould be brought to believe things ſo ſtrangely incredible as thoſe were which Chriſt and his Apoſtles preached?* So that by this it appears that the intention of miracles was to confirm a Divine teſtimony to the world, and to make that appear credible which otherwiſe would have ſeemed incredible: but to what end now, when this Divine teſtimony is believed in the world, ſhould miracles be continued among thoſe who believe the doctrine to be divine, the miracles wrought for the confirmation of it to have been true, and the Scriptures, which contain both, to be the undoubted word of God? To what purpoſe, then, the huge outcry of miracles in the Roman Church is, is hard to conceive, unleſs it be to make it appear how ambitious that Church is of being called by the name of him, *whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh, becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.* For had they received the love of the truth of the Goſpel, they would have believed it on the account of thoſe miracles, and ſigns, and wonders, which were wrought for the confirmation of it by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and not have gone about by their jugglings and impoſtures, inſtead of bringing men to believe the Goſpel, to make them queſtion the truth of the firſt miracles, when they ſee ſo many counterfeits; had we not great aſſurance the Apoſtles were men of other deſigns and intereſts than Popiſh Prieſts are, and that there is not now any ſuch neceſſity of miracles, as there was then when a Divine teſtimony, revealing the truth of Chriſtian religion, was confirmed by them.

2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10.

VI. 2. *Thoſe miracles cannot be divine, which are done now for the confirmation of any thing contrary to that Divine teſtimony which is confirmed by uncontrolled Divine miracles.* The caſe is not the ſame now which was before

before the coming of Chriſt; for then, though the law of Moſes was confirmed by miracles, yet though the doctrine of Chriſt did null the obligation of that law, the miracles of Chriſt were to be looked on as divine, becauſe God did not intend the ceremonial law to be perpetual; and there were many prophecies which could not have their accompliſhment but under a new ſtate. But now under the Goſpel, God hath declared this to be the laſt revelation of his mind and will to the world by his Son; that now the prophecies of the Old Teſtament are accompliſhed, and the prophecies of the New reſpect only the various conditions of the Chriſtian Church, without any the leaſt intimation of any further revelation of God's mind and will to the world; ſo that now the Scriptures are our adequate rule of faith, and that according to which we are to judge all pretenders to inſpiration or miracles. And according to this rule we are to proceed in any thing which is propounded to us to believe by any perſons, upon any pretences whatſoever. Under the law, after the eſtabliſhment of the law itſelf by the miracles of Moſes, the rule of judging all pretenders to miracles, was by the worſhip of the true God. *If there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder, and the ſign or the wonder come to paſs whereof he ſpake to thee, ſaying, Let us go after other Gods (which thou haſt not known), and let us ſerve them, thou ſhalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your ſoul.* Whereby it is plain, that, after the true doctrine is confirmed by Divine miracles, God may give the Devil or falſe prophets power to work, if not real miracles, yet ſuch as men cannot judge, by the things themſelves, whether they be real or no; and this God may do for the trial of men's faith, whether they will forſake the true doctrine, confirmed by greater miracles, for

Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

BOOK II.

the ſake of ſuch doctrines which are contrary thereto, and are confirmed by falſe prophets, by ſigns and wonders. Now in this caſe our rule of trial muſt not be ſo much the wonders conſidered in themſelves whether real or no, as the comparing them with the miracles which were wrought in confirmation of that doctrine which is contrary to this, which theſe wonders tend to the proving of. Therefore God's people under the law were to examine the ſcope and drift of the miracles; if they were intended to bring them to idolatry, whatever they were, they were not to hearken to thoſe who did them. So now under the Goſpel, as the worſhip of the true God was then the ſtandard whereby to judge of miracles by the law of Moſes, ſo the worſhip of the true God, through Jeſus Chriſt, and by the doctrine revealed by him, is the ſtandard whereby we ought to judge of all pretenders to work miracles. So that let the miracles be what they will, if they contradict that doctrine which Chriſt revealed to the world, we are to look upon them as only trials of our faith in Chriſt, to ſee whether we *love him with our whole hearts* or no. And therefore I think it needleſs to examine all the particulars of Lipſius's relations of miracles, wrought by his Diva Virgo Hallenſis and Aſprecollis; for if I ſee that their intention and ſcope is to ſet up the worſhip of dæmons, or a middle ſort of deities between God and us, which the Scripture is ignorant of, on that very account I am bound to reject them all. Although I think it very poſſible to find out the difference between true miracles and them, in the manner and circumſtances of their operation; but this, as it is of more curioſity, ſo of leſs neceſſity; for if the doctrine of the Scriptures was confirmed by miracles infinitely above theſe, I am bound to adhere to that, and not to believe any other doctrine, *though an Angel from heaven ſhould preach it*, much leſs, although ſome Popiſh Prieſts may boaſt much of miracles to confirm a doctrine oppoſite to the Goſpel;

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Goſpel; which I know not how far God may in judgment give thoſe images power to work, or others faith to believe, becauſe they would not receive the truth in the love of it: and theſe are now thoſe τέρατα ψεύδους, *lying wonders*, which the Scripture forewarns us that we ſhould not believe, viz. ſuch as lead men to the belief of lies, or of doctrines contrary to that of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. CHAP. X. 2 Theſſ. ii. 9.

VII. 3. *Where miracles are true and divine, there the effects which follow them, upon the minds of thoſe who believe them, are true and divine*, i. e. the effect of believing of them is the drawing of men from ſin unto God. This the primitive Chriſtians inſiſted much upon, as an undoubted evidence that the miracles of Chriſt were wrought by a Divine Power, becauſe the effect which followed them *was the work of converſion of ſouls from ſin and idols to God and Chriſt, and all true piety and virtue.* As the effect of the miracles of Moſes was the drawing a people off from ſuperſtition and idolatry to the worſhip of the true God, ſo the effect which followed the belief of the miracles of Chriſt in the world, was the purging men's ſouls from all ſin and wickedneſs to make them new creatures, and to live in all exactneſs and holineſs of converſation. And thereby Origen diſcovers the great difference between the miracles of Chriſt and Antichriſt; that the intent of all Antichriſt's wonders was *to bring men* εἰς ἀπάτην τῆς ἀδικίας, *to the deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, whereby to deſtroy them*; *but the intent of the miracles of Chriſt was* οὐκ ἀπάτη ἀλλὰ σωτηρία ψυχῶν, *not the deceiving but the ſaving of ſouls*; τίς γὰρ τὸν κρεῖττονα βίον, καὶ συγκλονοῦντα τὰ τῆς κακίας ὀσημέραι ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον, εὐλόγως φησὶν ἀπὸ ἀπάτης γίνεσθαι; *who can with any probability ſay, that reformation of life, and daily progreſs from evil to good, ſhould be the effect of mere deceit?* And therefore he ſaith, *Chriſt told his Diſciples that they ſhould do greater works than he had done; becauſe by their preaching and miracles the eyes of blind ſouls are opened, and the ears of ſuch as were deaf* Lib. ii. cont. Celſ. p. 90. Ed. Spencer.

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deaf to all goodneſs are opened, ſo far as to hearken to the precepts and promiſes of the Goſpel; and the feet of thoſe who were lame in their inward man, are ſo healed as to delight to run in the ways of God's commandments. Now is it poſſible that theſe ſhould be the effects of any evil ſpirit? But on the contrary, we ſee the effects of all impoſtures, and pretended miracles wrought by diabolical power, was to bring men off from God to ſin, and to diſſolve that ſtrict obligation to duty which was laid upon men by the Goſpel of Chriſt. Thus it was in that early ape of the Apoſtles, Simon Magus, who far outwent Apollonius Tyaneus, or any other Heathen, in his pretended miracles, according to the report which is given of him by the primitive Chriſtians: but we ſee the intent of his miracles was to raiſe an admiration of himſelf, and to bring men off from all holineſs of converſation, by aſſerting, among other damnable hereſies, that God did not at all regard *what men did, but only what they believed*: wherein the Gnoſtics were his followers. Now when miracles are wrought to be patrons of ſin, we may eaſily know from whom they come.

V. Grot. in 2 Theſſ. ii. 9. in Opuſc.

VIII. 4. *Thoſe miracles are wrought by a Divine Power, which tend to the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan in the world.* This is evident from hence, becauſe all ſuch things as are out of man's power to effect, muſt either be done by a power divine or diabolical: for as our Saviour argues, *Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation, and every city or houſe divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand; and if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand?* Now Chriſt by his miracles did not only diſpoſſeſs Satan out of men's bodies, but out of his temples too, as hath been ſhewn already. And beſides, the doctrine of Chriſt, which was confirmed by thoſe miracles, was in every thing directly contrary to the Devil's deſign in the world. For, 1. The Devil's deſign was to conceal himſelf among thoſe who worſhipped him; the deſign of the Goſpel was to

Matth. xii. 25, 26.

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to discover him whom the Gentiles worshipped to be an evil and malignant spirit, that designed nothing but their ruin. Now it appears in the whole history of Gentilism, the grand mystery of state, which the Devil used among the Heathens, was to make himself to be taken and worshipped for God, and to make them believe that their dæmons were very good and benign spirits; which made the Platonists and other philosophers so much incensed against the primitive Christians, when they declared their dæmons to be nothing else but infernal and wicked spirits, which sought the destruction of souls. CHAP. X.

2. *The Devil's great design was to draw men to the practice of the greatest wickedness, under a pretence of religion*; as is very observable in all the Heathen mysteries, which the more recondite and hidden they were, the greater wickedness lay at the bottom of them, and so were to purpose *mysteries of iniquity*. But now the design of the Gospel was to promote the greatest purity both of heart and life; there being in no other religion in the world either such incomparable precepts of holiness, or such encouraging promises to the practice of it (from eternal life hereafter as the reward, and the assistance of God's Spirit to help men here), or such prevailing motives to persuade men to it, from the *love of God in Christ to the world*, the *undertakings of Christ for us* in his death and sufferings, the excellent pattern we have to follow in our Saviour's own example. Now these things make it plain that the design of Christ and the Devil are diametrically opposite to each other. 3. The design of the Devil is to set God and mankind at the greatest distance from each other; the design of Christ in the Gospel is to bring them nearer together. The Devil first tempts to sin, and then for sin; he makes men presume to sin, and to despair because they have sinned. Christ first keeps men from sin by his precepts and threatenings, and then supposing sin, encourageth them to repent, with

BOOK II. hopes of pardon procured by himſelf for all truly penitent and believing ſinners. Thus in every thing the deſign of Chriſt and the Devil are contrary; which makes it evident that the miracles wrought in confirmation of the doctrine of Chriſt could be from no evil ſpirit, and therefore muſt be from a truly Divine power.

IX. 5. *True and Divine miracles may be known and diſtinguiſhed from falſe and diabolical, from the circumſtances, or the manner of their operation.* There were ſome peculiar ſignatures on the miracles of Chriſt, which are not to be found in any wrought by a power leſs than Divine; which Arnobius well expreſſeth in theſe words to the Heathens. *Poteſtis aliquem nobis deſignare, monſtrare ex omnibus illis magis qui unquam fuere per ſecula, conſimile aliquid Chriſto milleſima ex parte qui fecerit? qui ſine ulla vi carminum, ſine herbarum & graminum ſuccis, ſine ulla aliqua obſervatione ſollicita ſacrorum, libaminum, temporum?——Atqui conſtitit Chriſtum ſine ullis adminiculis rerum, ſine ullius ritus obſervatione, vel lege, omnia illa quæ fecit, nominis ſui poſſibilitate feciſſe, & quod proprium, conſentaneum, Deo dignum fuerat vero, nihil nocens aut noxium, ſed opiferum, ſed ſalutare, ſed auxiliaribus plenum bonis poteſtatis munificæ liberalitate donaſſe.* He challengeth the Heathens to produce any one of all their magicians who did the thouſandth part of what our Saviour did: who made uſe of none of their magical rites and obſervations in whatever he did; and whatever he did was merely by his own power, and was withal moſt becoming God, and moſt beneficial to the world. And thence he proceeds to anſwer the Heathens about the miracles wrought by their gods, which fell ſhort of thoſe of Chriſt in three main particulars; the *manner* of their working, and the *number* of them, and the *quality* of the things done.

Arnob. cont. Gentes, l. i. p. 25, 26, &c.

1. *The manner of their working.* What they did was with a great deal of pomp and ceremony; what Chriſt did was with a word ſpeaking, and ſometimes without

without it, by the touch of his garment. *Non inquiro, non exigo*, ſaith he, *quis Deus, aut quo tempore, cui fuerit auxiliatus, aut quem fractum reſtituerit ſanitati; illud ſolum audire deſidero, an ſine ullius adjunctione materiæ*, i. e. *medicaminis alicujus ad tactum morbos juſſerit ab hominibus evolare, imperaverit, fecerit & emori valetudinum cauſam, & debilium corpora ad ſuas remeare naturas. Omitting all other circumſtances, name me*, ſaith he, *but which of your Gods ever cured a diſeaſe without any adjoined matter, ſome preſcriptions or other; or which of them ever commanded diſeaſes out of bodies by their mere touch, and quite removed the cauſe of the diſtempers.* Æſculapius, he ſays, cured diſeaſes, but in the way that ordinary phyſicians do, by preſcribing ſomething or other to be done by the patients. *Nulla autem virtus eſt medicaminibus amovere quæ noceant; beneficia iſta rerum, non ſunt curantium poteſtates. To cure diſeaſes by preſcriptions argues no power at all in the preſcriber, but virtue in the medicine.*

Id. p. 28.

Ibid.

2. *In the number of the perſons cured.* They were very few which were cured in the Heathen temples; Chriſt cured whole multitudes, and that not in the reveſtries of the temples, where fraud and impoſture might be eaſily ſuſpected, but in the preſence of the people, who brought to him all manner of perſons ſick of all ſorts of diſeaſes, which were cured by him; and theſe ſo numerous, that the Evangeliſt, who records many of Chriſt's miracles which had been omitted by the others, yet tells us at laſt, the miracles of Chriſt were ſo many, *that the whole world would not contain them.* But now Arnobius tells the Heathens, *Quid prodeſt oſtendere unum aut alterum fortaſſe curatos, cum tot millibus ſubvenerit nemo, & plena ſint omnia miſerorum, infeliciumque delubra? What matter is it to ſhew one or two cured, when thouſands lie continually in the temples periſhing for want of cure?* yea ſuch as did *Æſculapium ipſum precibus fatigare, & invitare miſerrimis votis*, that could not beg a cure of Æſculapius with all their earneſtneſs and importunity.

John xxi. 25.

Id. p. 29.

3. *In the quality of the diſeaſes cured.* The cures among the Heathens were ſome ſlight things in compariſon of thoſe performed by Chriſt; the moſt acute, the moſt chronical, the moſt malignant of diſeaſes, cured by a touch, a word, a thought. A learned phyſician hath undertaken to make it evident, from the circumſtances of the hiſtory, and from the received principles among the moſt authentic phyſicians, that the diſeaſes cured by our Saviour were all incurable by the rules of phyſic; if ſo, the greater the power of our Saviour, who cured them with ſo much facility as he did. And he not only cured all diſeaſes himſelf, but gave a power to others, who were not at all verſed in matters of art and ſubtlety, that they ſhould do miracles likewiſe, *ſine fucis & adminiculis, without any fraud or aſſiſtance. Quid dicitis, O mentes incredulæ, difficiles, duræ! Alicuine mortalium Jupiter ille Capitolinus hujuſmodi pôteſtatem dedit?* When did ever the great Jupiter Capitolinus *give a power of working miracles to any? I do not ſay*, ſaith he, *of raiſing the dead, or curing the blind, or healing the lame*; *ſed ut puſtulam, reduviam, papulam, aut vocis imperio, aut manus contrectatione comprimeret: but to cure a wart, a pimple, any the moſt trivial thing, with a word ſpeaking, or the touch of the hand.* Upon this Arnobius challengeth the moſt famous of all the Heathen magicians; Zoroaſtres, Armenius, Pamphilus, Apollonius, Damigero, Dardanus, Velus, Julianus, and Bæbulus, or any other renowned magician, to give power to any one to make the dumb to ſpeak, the deaf to hear, the blind to ſee, or bring life into a dead body; or, if this be too hard, with all their magic rites and incantations, but to do that, *quod a ruſticis Chriſtianis juſſionibus factitatum eſt nudis, which ordinary Chriſtians do by their mere words:* ſo great a difference was there between the higheſt that could be done by magic, and the leaſt that was done by the name and power of Chriſt.

Gul. Ader. de Morbis Evangel.

Arnob. cont. Gentes, l. i. p. 31.

Id. p. 32.

6. *Where*

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6. *Where miracles are truly divine, God makes it evident, to all impartial judgments, that the things done exceed all created power.* For which purpoſe we are to obſerve, that, though impoſtures and deluſions may go far, the power of magicians further, when God permits them; yet when God works miracles to confirm a Divine teſtimony, he makes it evident that his power doth infinitely exceed them all. This is moſt conſpicuous in the caſe of Moſes and our bleſſed Saviour. Firſt Moſes, he began to do ſome miracles in the preſence of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, *turning his rod into a ſerpent:* but we do not find Pharaoh at all amazed at it, but ſends preſently for the magicians to do the ſame, who did it (whether really or only in appearance is not material to our purpoſe); but Aaron's *rod ſwallowed up theirs.* The next time *the waters are turned into blood by Moſes.* The *magicians they do ſo too.* After this, *Moſes brings up frogs upon the land; ſo do the magicians.* So that here now is a plain and open conteſt, in the preſence of Pharaoh and his people, between Moſes and the magicians, and they try for victory over each other; ſo that if Moſes do no more than they, they would look upon him but as a magician; but if Moſes do that, which, by the acknowledgment of theſe magicians themſelves, could be only by Divine power, then it is demonſtrably evident that his power was as far above the power of magic, as God is above the Devil. Accordingly we find it in the very next miracle, in *turning the duſt into ciniphes* (which we render *lice*); the magicians are nonpluſt, and give out, ſaying, in plain terms, *This is the finger of God.* And what greater acknowledgment can there be of Divine power, than the confeſſion of thoſe who ſeemed to conteſt with it, and to imitate it as much as poſſible? After this, we find not the magicians offering to conteſt with Moſes; and in the plague of *boils*, we particularly read *that they could not ſtand* before Moſes. Thus we ſee, in the caſe of Moſes, how evident

vii. 10, 12.

Exod. vii. 19, 22. viii. 6, 7.

viii. 19.

ix. 11.

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evident it was that there was a power above all power of magic, which did appear in Moſes. And ſo likewiſe in the caſe of our bleſſed Saviour; for although Simon Magus, Apollonius, or others, might do ſome ſmall things, or make ſome great ſhew and noiſe by what they did, yet none of them ever came near the doing things of the ſame kind which our Saviour did, curing the *born-blind, reſtoring the dead to life after four days*, and ſo as to live a conſiderable time after; or in the manner he did them, with a word, a touch, with that frequency and openneſs before his greateſt enemies as well as followers, and in ſuch an uncontrolled manner, that neither Jews or Heathens ever queſtioned the truth of them. And after all theſe, when he was laid in the grave after his crucifixion, exactly according to his own prediction he roſe again the third day, appeared frequently among his Diſciples for forty days together; after which, in their preſence, he *aſcended up to heaven*, and ſoon after made good his promiſe to them, *by ſending his holy Spirit upon them*; by which they ſpake with tongues, wrought miracles, went up and down preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt with great boldneſs, cheerfulneſs, and conſtancy; and after undergoing a great deal of hardſhip in it, they ſealed the truth of all they ſpake with their blood, laying down their lives to give witneſs to it. Thus abundantly, to the ſatisfaction of the minds of all good men, hath God given the higheſt rational evidence of the truth of the doctrine which he hath revealed to the world. And thus I have finiſhed the ſecond part of my taſk, which concerned the rational evidence of the truth of Divine revelation, from the perſons who were employed to deliver God's mind to the world; and therein have, I hope, made it evident that both Moſes and the Prophets, our Saviour and his Apoſtles, did come with ſufficient rational evidence to convince the world that they were perſons immediately ſent from God.

BOOK

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

Of the Being of God.

I. *The Principles of all Religion lie in the Being of God, and Immortality of the Soul: from them the Neceſſity of a particular Divine Revelation rationally deduced; the Method laid down for proving the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.* II. *Why* Moſes *doth not prove the Being of God, but ſuppoſe it.* III. *The Notion of a Deity very conſonant to Reaſon. Of the Nature of Ideas, and particularly of the Idea of God.* IV. *How we can form an Idea of an infinite Being.* V, VI. *How far ſuch an Idea argues Exiſtence.* VII, VIII. *The great Unreaſonableneſs of Atheiſm demonſtrated. Of the Hypotheſes of the* Ariſtotelian *and* Epicurean *Atheiſts.* IX. *The Atheiſts' Pretences examined and refuted.* X, XI, XII, XIII. *Of the Nature of the Arguments whereby we prove there is a God. Of univerſal Conſent, and the Evidence of that to prove a Deity and Immortality of Souls.* XIV, XV. *Of Neceſſity of Exiſtence implied in the Notion of God; and how far that proves the Being of God.* XVI. *The Order of the World, and Uſefulneſs of the Parts of it, and eſpecially of Man's Body, an Argument of a Deity.* XVII. *Some higher Principle proved to be in the World than Matter and Motion.* XVIII. *The Nature of the Soul, and Poſſibility of its ſubſiſting after Death.* XIX. *Strange Appearances in Nature not ſolvable by the Power of Imagination.*

HAVING in the precedent book largely given a rational account of the grounds of our faith, as to the perſons whom God employs to reveal his mind to

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to the world; if we can now make it appear that thoſe ſacred records, which we embrace as divinely inſpired, contain in them nothing unworthy of ſo great a name, or unbecoming perſons ſent from God to deliver, there will be nothing wanting to juſtify our religion, in point of reaſon, to be true, and of revelation, to be divine. For the Scriptures themſelves coming to us in the name of God, we are bound to believe them to be ſuch as they pretend to be, unleſs we have ground to queſtion the general foundations of all religion as uncertain, or this particular way of religion as not ſuitable to thoſe general foundations. The foundations of all religion lie in two things; *that there is a God* who rules the world, and

Heb. xi. 6.

that the *ſouls of men are capable of ſubſiſting after death*; *for he that comes unto God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that ſeek him*; ſo that if theſe things be not ſuppoſed as moſt agreeable to human reaſon, we cannot imagine upon what grounds mankind ſhould embrace any way of religion at all. For if there be not a God whom I am to ſerve and obey, and if I have not a ſoul of an immortal nature, there can be no ſufficient obligation to religion, nor motive inducing to it: for all obligation to obedience muſt ſuppoſe the exiſtence of ſuch a Being, which hath power to command me; and by reaſon of the promiſcuous ſcatterings of good and evil in this life, the motives engaging men to the practice of religion muſt ſuppoſe the certainty of a future ſtate. If theſe things be ſure, and the foundations of religion, in general, thereby firmly eſtabliſhed, it will preſently follow, as a matter moſt agreeable to reaſon, that the God whom we are to ſerve ſhould himſelf preſcribe the way of his own worſhip; and if the right of donation of that happineſs, which men's ſouls are capable of, be alone in himſelf, that he alone ſhould declare the terms on which it may be expected. For man being a creature endued with a free principle of acting, which he is conſcious to himſelf of, and therefore

fore not being carried to his end by neceſſity of nature or external violence, without the concurrence of his own reaſon and choice, we muſt ſuppoſe this happineſs to depend upon the performance of ſome conditions on man's part, whereby he may demonſtrate that it is the matter of his free choice, and that he freely quits all other intereſts, that he might obtain the enjoyment of it. Which conditions to be performed, being expreſſions of man's obedience towards God as his Creator and Governor, and of his gratitude for the tenders of ſo great a happineſs, which is the free gift of his Maker, we cannot ſuppoſe any one to have power to preſcribe theſe conditions, but he that hath power likewiſe to deprive the ſoul of her happineſs upon non-performance; and that muſt be God himſelf. But in order to man's underſtanding his duty, and his obligation to obedience, it is neceſſary that theſe conditions muſt not be locked up in the cabinet council of heaven, but muſt be ſo far declared and revealed, that he may be fully acquainted with thoſe terms which his happineſs depends upon; elſe his neglect of them would be excuſable, and his miſery unavoidable. Had man indeed remained without offending his Maker, he might ſtill have ſtood in his favour upon the general terms of obedience due from the creature to his Creator, and to all ſuch particular precepts, which ſhould bear the impreſs of his Maker's will upon them; beſide which, the whole volume of the creation without, and his own reaſon within, would have been ſufficient directors to him in the performance of his duty. But he abuſing his liberty, and being thereby guilty of apoſtaſy from God (as is evident by a continued propenſity to ſin, and the ſtrangeneſs between God and the ſouls of men), a particular revelation is now become neceſſary, that mankind may thereby underſtand on what terms God will be pleaſed again, and by what means they may be reſtored into his favour. And laſtly, it not agreeing with

BOOK III. with the free and communicative nature of Divine goodneſs (which was the firſt original of the world's creation) to ſuffer all mankind to periſh in their own folly, we muſt ſuppoſe this way for man's recovery to be ſomewhere preſcribed, and the revelation of it to be ſomewhere extant in the world. So that from the general principles of the exiſtence of God, and immortality of the ſoul, we have deduced, by clear and evident reaſon, the neceſſity of ſome particular Divine revelation, as the ſtandard and meaſure of religion. And according to theſe principles we muſt examine whatever pretends to be of Divine revelation; for it muſt be ſuitable to that Divine nature from whom it is ſuppoſed to come, and it muſt be agreeable to the conditions of the ſouls of men; and therefore that which carries with it the greateſt evidence of Divine revelation, is a faithful repreſentation of the ſtate of the caſe between God and the ſouls of men, and a Divine diſcovery of thoſe ways whereby men's ſouls may be fitted for eternal happineſs. A Divine revelation then muſt be faithful and true in all its narrations; it muſt be excellent and becoming God in all its diſcoveries: and therefore all that can with any reaſon be deſired for proof of the Divine authority of the Scriptures, will lie in theſe three things: Firſt, *That the foundations of religion are of undoubted certainty, or that there is a God, and that men's ſouls are immortal.* Secondly, *That the Scriptures do moſt faithfully relate the matters of greateſt antiquity therein contained* (which do moſt concern the hiſtory of the breach between God and man). Thirdly, *That the Scriptures are the only authentic records of thoſe terms on which happineſs may be expected in another world.*

II. I begin with the firſt of them, which concerns the exiſtence of God, and immortality of the ſoul; both which ſeem to be ſuppoſed as general *prolepſes* in the writings of Moſes, and as things ſo conſonant to human nature, that none to whom his writings ſhould come

come could be ſuppoſed to queſtion them; and therefore he ſpends no time in the operoſe proving of either of theſe, knowing to how little purpoſe his writings would be to ſuch who denied theſe firſt principles of all religion. But beſide this, there may be theſe accounts given why theſe main foundations of all religion are no more inſiſted on in the firſt books of the Scripture, which contain the originals of the world. Firſt, *Becauſe theſe were, in the time of the writing of them, believed with an univerſal conſent of mankind.* In thoſe more early days of the world, when the tradition of the firſt ages of it was more freſh and entire, it is ſcarce imaginable that men ſhould queſtion the being of a God, when the hiſtory of the flood, and the propagation of the world after it by the ſons of Noah, and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah were ſo freſh in their memories, as having been done ſo few generations before them. And by what remains of any hiſtory of other nations in thoſe elder times, men were ſo far from atheiſm, that polytheiſm and idolatry were the common practice of the world; as is moſt evident in all relations of the ancient Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and other nations, who all ſuppoſed theſe two principles, as well as thoſe who ſerved the true God. And in all probability, as men are apt to run from one extreme to another, polytheiſm was the firſt occaſion of atheiſm, and idolatry of irreligion. And thence we find the firſt appearance of atheiſts to be in the moſt blind and ſuperſtitious age of Greece, when the obſcene poets had ſo debauched the common underſtandings of the people, as to make them believe ſuch things concerning their Gods, which were ſo incongruous to human nature, that all who had any ſenſe of goodneſs left could not but loath and abhor ſuch deities. And therefore we find all the flouts and jeers of the reputed atheiſts among them; ſuch as Dionyſius, Diagoras, Theodorus, Euhemerus, Meſſenius, and others, were caſt upon

CHAP. I.

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upon their venerable deities, which they ſo ſolemnly worſhipped, who had been before, as Euhemerus plainly told them, poor mortal men, and thoſe not of the beſt reputation neither: and therefore, as the Epicurean in Tully well ſays, *omnis eorum cultus eſſet in luctu*, the moſt ſuitable devotion for them had been lamenting their death. Now when theſe common deities were ſo much derided by intelligent men, and yet the order of the world ſeemed to tell them there was really a God, though thoſe were none, thoſe who had philoſophical wits, ſuch as Democritus and Epicurus, ſet themſelves to work, to ſee if they could ſolve the phenomena of nature without a Deity; and therefore aſſerted the origin of the univerſe to be only by a fortuitous concourſe of infinite little particles. But herein they befooled themſelves and their greedy followers, who were glad to be rid of thoſe anxieties of mind which the thoughts of a Deity and an immortal ſoul did cauſe within them. And although Lucretius, in a bravado, tells us of his maſter, *that when men's minds were ſunk under the burden of religion,*

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 38.

Lucret. l. i. v. 63.

Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jaceret
In terris oppreſſa gravi ſub religione:
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Eſt oculos auſus, primuſque obſiſtere contra.

That Epicurus was the firſt true giant who durſt encounter the Gods, and, if we believe him, *overthrew them in open field*;

Ibid. v. 79.

Quare religio pedibus ſubjecta viciſſim
Obteritur, nos exæquat victoria cœlo.

Yet Cotta in Tully reports the iſſue of this battle quite otherwiſe; for although the greateſt triumph in this victory had been only to become like the beaſts that periſh, yet, if we believe Cotta, Epicurus was ſo far from gaining any of his beloved eaſe and pleaſure by his ſentiments, that never was ſchoolboy more afraid of a rod, nor did any enemy more dread

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dread a conqueror, than Epicurus did the thoughts of a God and death. *Nec quenquam vidi, qui magis ea, quæ timenda esse negaret, timeret; mortem dico & Deos.* So hard it is for an Epicurean, even after he hath prostituted his conscience, to silence it; but (whatever there be in the air) there is an elastical power in conscience that will bear itself up, notwithstanding the weight that is laid upon it. And yet after all the labours of Epicurus, he knew it was to no purpose to endeavour to root out wholly the belief of a Deity out of the world, because of the unanimous consent of the world in it; and therefore he admits of it as a necessary prolepsis, or anticipation of human nature, *quod in omnium animis Deorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura, that nature itself had stamped an idea of God upon the minds of men; cum enim non instituto aliquo aut more aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio, intelligi necesse est Deos esse, quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus; de quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est,* as Velleius the Epicurean argues. Since the belief of a Deity neither rises from custom, nor was enacted by law, yet is unanimously assented to by all mankind; it necessarily follows that there must be a Deity, because the idea of it is so natural to us. If it were thus acknowledged in the philosophical age of Greece, when men bent their wits to unsettle the belief of such things as tended to religion, how much more might it be esteemed a general principle of human nature in those elder times, when not so much as one dissenter appeared that we read of among the more ancient nations? But, secondly, it was less needful for Moses to insist much on the proof of a Deity in his writings, when his very employment, and the history he wrote, was the greatest evidence that there was one. Could any of them question whether there were a God or no, who had heard his voice at Mount Sinai, and had received a law from him; who had been

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 86.

Ibid. l. i. c. 44.

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preſent at ſo many miracles which were done by Moſes in Egypt and the wilderneſs? What more evident demonſtration of God could be deſired, than thoſe many unparalleled miracles which were wrought among them? And thoſe who would not be convinced by them that there was a God, would certainly be convinced by nothing. Thirdly, It was unſuitable to the purpoſe of Moſes to go about to prove any thing he delivered, by the mere force of human reaſon, becauſe he wrote as a perſon employed by God; and therefore by the arguments on which they were to believe his teſtimony in whatever he wrote, they could not but believe there was a God that employed him. And from hence it is that Moſes with ſo much majeſty and authority begins the hiſtory of the creation, with, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* There could be no greater evidence that there was an infinitely wiſe, good, and powerful God, than that the univerſe was produced out of nothing by him: and what reaſon could there be to diſtruſt his teſtimony who relates it, who manifeſted not only that there was a God, but that he was employed by him, by the miracles which he wrought? So that all our former diſcourſe, concerning the evidences of Divine revelation, are a moſt palpable demonſtration of a Deity; for if there be ſuch a Power, which can alter the courſe of nature when he pleaſes, the being wherein it is muſt needs be infinite; which is the ſame which we mean by God.

III. But yet, for thoſe whoſe minds are ſo coy and ſqueamiſh as to any thing of Divine revelation, we want not ſufficient evidence in point of reaſon, to prove to them the exiſtence of a Deity. In order to which, I ſhall clear theſe following propoſitions.

1. *That the true notion of a Deity is moſt agreeable to the faculties of men's ſouls, and moſt conſonant to reaſon and the light of nature.*

2. *That*

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2. *That thoſe who will not believe that there is a God, do believe other things on far leſs reaſon, and muſt by their own principles deny ſome things which are apparently true.* CHAP. I.

3. *That we have as certain evidence that there is a God, as it is poſſible for us to have, conſidering his nature.*

That the true notion of God is moſt agreeable to the faculties of men's ſouls, and moſt conſonant to reaſon and the light of nature; i. e. that the idea of God (or that which we conceive in our minds when we think of God) is ſo far from being any ways repugnant to any principle of reaſon within us, that it is hard to pitch on any other notion which hath fewer entanglements in it, to a mind ſo far metaphyſical as to abſtract from ſenſe and prejudice. I grant it very difficult, nay impoſſible, for thoſe to have any true ſettled notion of a God, who ſearch for an idea of him in their fancies, and were never conſcious to themſelves of any higher faculty in their ſouls than mere imagination. Such may have *imaginem Jovis*, or *galeatæ Minervæ*, as he in Tully ſpeaks; ſome idea of an idol in their minds, but none of a true God; for we may as ſoon come by the ſight of colours to underſtand the nature of ſounds, as by any corporal phantaſms come to have a true idea of God. And although ſometimes an idea be taken for that impreſſion of things which is lodged in the phantaſy, yet here we take it in a more general ſenſe, as it contains the repreſentation of any thing in the mind; as it is commonly ſaid in the ſchools that the Divine intellect doth underſtand things by their ideas, which are nothing elſe but the things themſelves as they are objectively repreſented to the underſtanding. So that an idea, in its general ſenſe in which we take it, is nothing elſe but the objective being of a thing as it terminates the underſtanding, and is the form of the act of intellection: that which is then immediately repreſented to the mind in its perception of things, is the idea or notion of it. Now Prop. 1.

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such an idea as this is, may be either true or false: for better understanding of which, we must consider that an idea in the soul may be considered two ways. 1. As it is a mode of cogitation, or the act of the soul apprehending an object. Now this way no idea can be false; for as it is an act of the mind, every idea hath its truth. For whether I imagine a golden mountain, or another, it matters not here; for the one idea is as true as the other, considering it merely as an act of the mind: for the mind is as really employed about the one as the other, as the will is about an object, whether it be feasible or no. 2. The idea may be considered in regard of its objective reality, or as it represents some outward object. Now the truth or falsehood of the idea lies in the understanding passing judgment concerning the outward object, as existent, which doth correspond to the idea which is in the mind. And the proneness of the understanding's error in this case, ariseth from the different nature of those things which are represented to the mind; for some of them are general and abstracted things, and do not at all suppose existence; as the nature of truth, of a being, of cogitation. Other ideas depend upon existence supposed; as the idea of the sun, which I apprehend in my mind, because I have seen it. But besides these, there are other ideas in the mind, which the understanding forms within itself by its own power, as it is a principle of cogitation; such are those which are called *entia rationis*, and have no other existence at all but only in the understanding, as chimeras, centaurs, &c. Now as to these, we are to observe, that although the composition of these things together by the understanding, be that which makes these ideas to be only fictitious, yet the understanding would not be able to compound such things, were they not severally represented to the mind; as unless we had known what a horse and a man had been, our minds could not have conjoined them together in its apprehension.

henſion. So that in theſe which are the moſt fictitious ideas, we ſee, that although the idea itſelf be a mere creature of the underſtanding, yet the mind could not form ſuch an idea but upon pre-exiſtent matter; and ſome objective reality muſt be ſuppoſed, in order to the intellectual conception of theſe anomalous entities. By which we ſee that that ſtrange kind of omnipotency which ſome have attributed to the underſtanding, lies not in a power of conceiving things wholly impoſſible, or fancying ideas of abſolute non-entities, but in a kind of African copulation of ſuch ſpecies of things together, which in nature ſeem wholly incompoſſible (as the ſchools ſpeak), or have no congruity at all in the order of the univerſe. So that had there never been any ſuch things in the world as matter and motion, it is very hard to conceive how the underſtanding could have formed within itſelf the variety of the ſpecies of ſuch things, which are the reſults of thoſe two grand principles of the univerſe. But becauſe it is ſo impoſſible for minds, not very contemplative and metaphyſical, to abſtract from matter, thence it is we are apt to imagine ſuch a power in the underſtanding, whereby it may form ideas of ſuch things which have no objective reality at all. I grant thoſe we call *entia rationis* have no external reality, as they are ſuch; but yet I ſay, the exiſtence of matter in the world, and the corporeal phantaſms of outward beings, are the foundation of the ſoul's conception of thoſe entities, which have no exiſtence beyond the human intellect. CHAP. I.

IV. The great enquiry then is, how far this plaſtic power of the underſtanding may extend itſelf, in its forming an idea of God. That there is ſuch a one in the minds of men, is evident to every one that conſults his own faculties, and enquires of them, whether they cannot apprehend a ſettled and conſiſtent notion of a Being which is abſolutely perfect? For that is all we underſtand by the idea of God;

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not that there is any ſuch connate idea in the ſoul, in the ſenſe which connate ideas are commonly underſtood, but that there is a faculty in the ſoul, whereby, upon the free uſe of reaſon, it can form within itſelf a ſettled notion of ſuch a Being, which is as perfect as it is poſſible for us to conceive a Being to be. If any difficulty be made concerning the forming ſuch a notion in one's mind, let the perſon who ſcruples it only enquire of himſelf, whether he judges all beings in the world equal? Whether a muſhroom hath in it all the perfections which man hath? Which I ſuppoſe none, who have a mind within them, can queſtion. If then it be granted that man hath ſome perfections in him above inferior creatures, it will be no matter of difficulty to ſhew wherein man exceeds other inferior beings. For is not life a greater perfection than the want of it? Is not reaſon and knowledge a perfection above ſenſe? And ſo let us proceed to thoſe things wherein one man differs from another; for it is evident that all men are not of equal accompliſhments. Is not then forecaſt and prudence above incogitancy and folly? Is not the knowledge of cauſes of things better than ſtupidity and ignorance? Is not beneficence and liberality more noble than parſimony and narrowneſs of ſpirit? Is not true goodneſs far above debauchery and intemperance? And are not all theſe far better, when they are joined with ſuch a power as hath no limits or bounds at all? Now then is it not poſſible for a man's mind, proceeding in its ordinary way of intellection, to form a notion of ſuch a Being, which hath wiſdom, goodneſs, and power in it, without any limits and bounds at all, or any of thoſe abatements, which any of theſe perfections are found within man? For it is unconceivable that the mind of man can attribute to itſelf abſolute perfection, when it cannot but ſee its own defects in thoſe things it excels other creatures in; and ſuppoſing it had power, goodneſs, and knowledge far above what it hath, yet it

it cannot but ſay, that theſe perfections would be greater if it were always poſſeſſed of them, and it were impoſſible that it ſhould ever ceaſe to be, or not have been. So that now joining infinite goodneſs, wiſdom, and power, with eternity and neceſſity of exiſtence, the reſult is the notion of a Being abſolutely perfect. So that now whoever queſtions the ſuitableneſs of ſuch a notion or idea to the faculties of men's ſouls, muſt queſtion the truth of his own faculties, and the method they proceed in, in their cleareſt conceptions and ratiocinations. And the mind of man may as well queſtion the truth of any idea it has within itſelf, as of this we now diſcourſe of. Nay, it may be far ſooner puzzled in any of thoſe ideas, which are tranſmitted into the phantaſy by the impreſſions of corporeal beings upon the organs of ſenſe, than in this more intellectual and abſtracted idea, which depends wholly upon the mind. CHAP. I.

V. All the difficulty now is, whether this idea of ſuch an abſolutely perfect Being, be any thing elſe but the underſtanding's plaſtic power, whereby it can unite all theſe perfections together in one conception; or doth it neceſſarily imply that there muſt be ſuch a Being really exiſtent, or elſe I could never have formed ſuch a ſettled notion of him in my mind? To this I anſwer, 1. It is as much as I deſire at preſent, that the forming of ſuch an idea in the mind, is as ſuitable and agreeable to our faculties as the forming the conception of any other Being in the world. For hereby it is moſt evident that the notion of a God imports nothing incongruous to reaſon, or repugnant to the faculties of our ſouls: but that the mind will form as ſettled and clear a notion of God, as of any thing which, in the judgment of Epicurus, his infallible ſenſes did the moſt aſſure him of. So that there can be no ſhadow of a pretence why any ſhould reject the being of a God, becauſe of the impoſſibility to conceive any ſuch being as God is. If to this it be objected, *that ſuch things are implied in this idea*

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which make it unconceivable, in that all the perfections in this Being are ſuppoſed to be infinite, and infinity tranſcends our capacity of apprehenſion; to this I anſwer, 1. That thoſe who deny infinity in God, muſt neceſſarily attribute it to ſomething elſe; as to infinite ſpace, infinity of ſucceſſions of ages and perſons, if the world were eternal; and therefore it is moſt unreaſonable to reject any notion for that which, it is impoſſible, but if I deny that, I muſt attribute it to ſomething elſe, to whoſe idea it is far leſs proper than it is to God's. 2. Leſt I ſhould rather ſeek to avoid the argument than to ſatisfy it, I ſay, that, though infinite as infinite cannot be comprehended, yet we may clearly and diſtinctly apprehend a Being to be of that nature, that no limits can be aſſigned to it, as to its power or preſence; which is as much as to underſtand it to be infinite. The *ratio formalis* of infinity may not be underſtood clearly and diſtinctly; but yet the Being which is infinite may be. Infinity itſelf cannot be on this account, becauſe however poſitive we apprehend it, yet we always apprehend it in a negative way, becauſe we conceive it by denying all limitations and bounds to it; but the Being which is infinite we apprehend in a poſitive manner, although not adequately, becauſe we cannot comprehend all which is in it. As we may clearly and diſtinctly ſee the ſea, though we cannot diſcover the bounds of it; ſo may we clearly and diſtinctly apprehend ſome perfections of God, when we fix our minds on them, although we are not able to graſp them altogether in our narrow and confined intellects, becauſe they are infinite. Thus we ſee that God's infinity doth not at all abate the clearneſs and diſtinctneſs of the notion which we have of God; ſo that though the perfections of God are without bounds or limits, yet it bears no repugnancy at all to men's natural faculties, to have a ſettled idea of a Being infinitely perfect in their minds.

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To the queſtion I anſwer, It ſeems highly probable, and far more conſonant to reaſon than the contrary, that this idea of God upon the mind of man is no merely fictitious idea, but that it is really imprinted there by that God whoſe idea it is; and therefore doth ſuppoſe a reality in the thing correſpondent to that objective reality which is in the underſtanding. For although I am not ſo well ſatisfied that the mere objective reality of the idea of God doth exceed the efficiency of the mind, as that idea is nakedly conſidered in itſelf, becauſe of the unlimited power of the underſtanding in conception, yet I ſay, conſidering that idea in all the circumſtances of it, it ſeems highly probable that it is no mere *ens rationis*, or figment of the underſtanding; and that will appear on theſe conſiderations. 1. This idea is of ſuch a nature as could not be formed from the underſtanding's conſideration of any corporeal phantaſms: becauſe whatever hath any thing of matter in it, involves of neceſſity many imperfections along with it; for every part of matter is diviſible into more parts. Now it is a thing evident to natural light, that it is a greater perfection not to be diviſible than to be ſo. Beſides, corporeal phantaſms are ſo far from helping us in forming this idea, that they alone hinder us from a diſtinct conception of it while we attend to them; becauſe theſe bear no proportion at all to ſuch a being. So that this idea, however, muſt be a pure act of intellection; and therefore ſuppoſing there were no other faculty in man but imagination, it would bear the greateſt repugnancy to our conceptions; and it would be, according to the principles of Epicurus, and ſome modern philoſophers, a thing wholly impoſſible to form an idea of God, unleſs, with Epicurus, we imagine him to be corporeal, which is to ſay, he is no God. Which was the reaſon that Tully ſaid, Epicurus did only *nomine ponere*, *re tollere Deos*, becauſe ſuch a notion of God is repugnant to natural light. So that

CHAP. I. VI.

if

BOOK III. if this idea doth wholly abſtract from corporeal phantaſms, it thereby appears that there is a higher faculty in man's ſoul than mere imagination; and it is hardly conceivable whence a faculty, which thus extends itſelf to an infinite object, ſhould come, but from an infinite Being: eſpecially if we conſider, ſecondly, that the underſtanding, in forming this idea of God, doth not by diſtinct acts firſt collect one perfection, and then another, and at laſt unite theſe together; but the ſimplicity and unity of all theſe perfections is as neceſſarily conceived as any of them. Granting then that the underſtanding, by the obſerving of ſeveral perfections in the world, might be able to abſtract theſe ſeverally from each being wherein they were, yet whence ſhould the idea of the unity and inſeparability of all theſe perfections come? The mind may, it is true, knit ſome things together in fictitious ideas; but then thoſe are ſo far from unity with each other, that in themſelves they ſpeak mutual repugnancy to one another, which makes them proper *entia rationis*; but theſe ſeveral perfections are ſo far from ſpeaking repugnancy to each other, that the unity and inſeparability of them is as neceſſary to the forming of this idea, as any other perfection whatſoever. So that from hence it appears that the conſideration of the perfections which are in the creatures, is only an occaſion given to the mind to help it in its idea of God, and not that the idea itſelf depends upon thoſe perfections as the cauſes of it; as in the cleareſt mathematical truths the manner of demonſtration may be neceſſary to help the underſtanding to its clearer aſſent, though the things in themſelves be undoubtedly true. For all minds are not equally capable of the ſame truths; ſome are of quicker apprehenſion than others are: now although to ſlower apprehenſions a more particular way of demonſtrating things be neceſſary, yet the truths in themſelves are equal, though they have not equal evidence to ſeveral perſons.

3. It

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3. It appears that this is no mere fictitious idea, from the uniformity of it in all persons who have freed themselves from the entanglements of corporeal phantasms. Those we call *entia rationis*, we find, by experience in our minds, that they are formed *ad placitum*. We may imagine them as many ways as we please, but we see it is quite otherwise in this idea of God; for in those attributes or perfections, which by the light of nature we attribute to God, there is an uniform consent in all those who have divested their minds of corporeal phantasms in their conceptions of God. For while men have agreed that the object of their idea is a Being absolutely perfect, there hath been no dissent in the perfections which have been attributed to it. None have questioned but infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, joined with necessity of existence, have been all implied in this idea. So that it is scarce possible to instance in any one idea, no not of those things which are most obvious to our senses, wherein there hath been so great an uniformity of men's conceptions, as in this idea of God. And the most gross corporeal idea of the most sensible matter hath been more liable to heats and disputes among philosophers, than this idea of a Being infinite and purely spiritual. Which strongly proves my present proposition, that this idea of God is very consonant to natural light; for it is hardly conceivable that there should be so universal a consent of minds in this idea, were it not a natural result from the free use of our reason and faculties. And that which adds further weight to this argument is, that although infinity be so necessarily implied in this idea of God, yet men do not attribute all kind of infinite things to God; for there being conceivable infinite number, infinite longitude, as well as infinite power and knowledge, our minds readily attribute the latter to God, and as readily abstract the other from his nature; which is an argument this idea

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idea is not fictitious, but argues reality in the thing correſpondent to our conception of it. So much may ſuffice to clear the firſt propoſition, viz. *that the notion of a God is very ſuitable to the faculties of men's ſouls, and to that light of nature which they proceed by in forming the conceptions of things.*

VII. Prop. 2.

Thoſe who deny that there is a God, do aſſert other things on far leſs evidence of reaſon, and muſt by their own principles deny ſome things which are apparently true. One would expect that ſuch perſons, who are apt to condemn the whole world of folly, in believing the truth of religion, and would fain be admired as men of a deeper reach, and greater wit and ſagacity than others, would, when they have exploded a Deity, at leaſt give us ſome more rational and conſiſtent account of things, than we can give that there is a God. But, on the contrary, we find the reaſons on which they reject a Deity ſo lamentably weak, and ſo eaſily retorted upon themſelves, and the hypotheſes they ſubſtitute inſtead of a Deity ſo precarious, obſcure, and uncertain, that we need no other argument to evince the reaſonableneſs of religion, than from the manifeſt folly, as well as impiety, of thoſe who oppoſe it. Which we ſhall make evident by theſe two things: 1. *That while they deny a Deity, they aſſert other things on far leſs reaſon.* 2. *That by thoſe principles on which they deny a Deity, they muſt deny ſome things which are apparently true.*

1. *That they aſſert ſome things on far leſs reaſon than we do that there is a God.* For if there be not an infinitely powerful God, who produced the world out of nothing, it muſt neceſſarily follow, according to the different principles of the Ariſtotelian and Epicurean Atheiſts, that either the world was as it is from all eternity, or elſe that it was firſt made by the fortuitous concourſe of atoms. Now I appeal to the reaſon of any perſon, who hath the free uſe of it, whether either of theſe two hypotheſes, urged with the

the ſame, or greater difficulties, &c. be not far more weakly proved than the exiſtence of a Deity is, or the production of the world by him. CHAP. I.

1. *They run themſelves into the ſame difficulties which they would avoid in the belief of a Deity*; and nothing can be a greater evidence of an entangled mind than this is: to deny a thing becauſe of ſome difficulty in it, and inſtead of it to aſſert another thing which is chargeable with the very ſame difficulty in a higher degree. Thus when they reject a Deity, becauſe they cannot underſtand what infinity means; both theſe hypotheſes are liable to the ſame intricacy in apprehending the nature of ſomething infinite. For, according to the Epicureans, there muſt be an infinite ſpace; and what greater eaſe to the mind is there in conceiving an idea of that, than of an infinite Being? And if the world be eternal, there muſt have been paſt an infinite ſucceſſion of ages; and is not the underſtanding as eaſily loſt in this, as in an eternal Being which created the world? For if the courſe of generations in the world had no beginning at all (which neceſſarily follows upon the eternity of the world), then an infinite number of ſucceſſions are already paſt, and if paſt, then at an end; and ſo we find an infinite which hath had an end, which is a conſequence becoming one who avoids the belief of a Deity, becauſe infinity is an unconceivable thing. Beſides, if the number of generations hath been infinite, theſe two conſequences will unavoidably follow, which the reaſon of any one but an Atheiſt would ſtartle at, that one infinite may be greater than another, and that the part is equal to the whole. For let him fix where he pleaſes in the courſe of generations, I demand, whether in the great-grandfather's time the ſucceſſion of generations was finite or infinite; if finite, then it had a beginning, and ſo the world not eternal; if infinite, then I aſk, whether there were not a longer ſucceſſion of generations in the time of his great-grand-children, and ſo there muſt

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must be a number greater than that which was infinite; for the former succession was infinite, and this hath more generations in it than that had: but if it be said that they were equal, because both infinite, then the succession of generations to the grandfather, being but a part of that which extends to his grand-children and posterity, the part is equal to the whole. And is not now the notion of an infinite Being enough to stumble an Atheist's reason, when he can so nimbly leap over so apparent contradictions? I insist not on this as an evident demonstration to prove a Deity, which possibly it may not amount to, because it may only demonstrate the impossibility of our understanding's comprehending the nature of infinity. But however, it doth most evidently demonstrate the folly and unreasonableness of the Atheist, who rejects the being of God on the account of his infinity, when his understanding is more lost in apprehending an infinite succession of generations; which follows from his supposition of the eternity of the world. If then it be impossible, as it is, upon any principles whatsoever, to avoid the conception of somewhat infinite and eternal, either matter or space, or some being, let any one appeal to his own reason whether it be not more agreeable to that, to attribute these perfections to such a Being, to whose idea they necessarily belong, than to attribute them to this world, in whose conception they are not at all implied, but, on the contrary, they do far more puzzle our understandings, than when we conceive them to be in God? If somewhat must have a continued duration, and be of an unbounded nature, how much more rational is it to conceive wisdom, power, and goodness, to be conjoined with eternity and infinity, than to bestow these attributes upon an empty space, or upon dull and unactive matter? It cannot be reason, then, but some more base and unworthy principle, which makes the Atheist question the being of God, because

cauſe his perfections are unconceivable, when, according to his own principles, the moſt puzzling attributes of God return upon him with more force and violence, and that in a more inexplicable manner. CHAP. I.

2. As the Atheiſt muſt admit thoſe things himſelf which he rejects the being of God for, ſo he admits them upon far weaker grounds than we do attribute them to God. If any thing may be made evident to man's natural reaſon concerning the exiſtence of a Being ſo infinite as God is, we doubt not but to make it appear that we have great aſſurance of the being of God; but how far muſt the Atheiſt go, how heartily muſt he beg before his hypotheſis, either of the fortuitous concourſe of atoms, or eternity of the world, will be granted to him? For if we ſtay till he proves either of theſe by evident and demonſtrative reaſons, the world may have an end before he proves his atoms could give it a beginning; and we may find it eternal, *a parte poſt*, before he can prove it was ſo *a parte ante*. For the proof of a Deity we appeal to his own faculties, reaſon and conſcience; we make uſe of arguments before his eyes; we bring the univerſal ſenſe of mankind along with us: but for his principles, we muſt wholly alter the preſent ſtage of the world, and crumble the whole univerſe into little particles; we muſt grind the ſun to powder, and by a new way of interment turn the earth into duſt and aſhes, before we can ſo much as imagine how the world could be framed. And when we have thus far begged leave to imagine things to be what they never were, we muſt then ſtand by in ſome infinite ſpace to behold the friſkings and dancings about of theſe little particles of matter, till, by their frequent rencounters and juſtlings one upon another, they at laſt link themſelves together, and run ſo long in a round till they make whirlpools enough for ſun, moon, and ſtars, and all the bodies of the univerſe to emerge out of. VIII.

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BOOK III.

of. But what was it which at firſt ſet theſe little particles of matter in motion? Whence came ſo great variety in them to produce ſuch wonderful diverſities in bodies as there are in the world? How came theſe caſual motions to hit ſo luckily into ſuch admirable contrivances as are in the univerſe? When I once ſee a thouſand blind men run the point of a ſword in at a key-hole without one miſſing; when I find them all friſking together in a ſpacious field, and exactly meeting all at laſt in the very middle of it; when I once find, as Tully ſpeaks, the annals of Ennius fairly written in a heap of ſand, and, as Kepler's wife told him, a room full of herbs moving up and down, fall down into the exact order of ſallads, I may then think the atomical hypotheſis probable, and not before. But what evidence of reaſon or demonſtration have we, that the great bodies of the world did reſult from ſuch a motion of theſe ſmall particles? *It is poſſible to be ſo*, ſaith Epicurus. What if we grant it poſſible; can no things in the world be, which it is poſſible might have been otherwiſe? What elſe thinks Epicurus of the generations of things now? They are ſuch certainly as the world now is; and yet he believes it was once otherwiſe. Muſt therefore a bare poſſibility of the contrary make us deny our reaſon, ſilence conſcience, contradict the univerſal ſenſe of mankind by excluding a Deity out of the world? But whence doth it appear poſſible? Did we ever find any thing of the ſame nature with the world produced in ſuch a manner by ſuch a concourſe of atoms? Or is it becauſe we find in natural beings how much theſe particles of matter ſerve to ſolve the phænomena of nature? But doth it at all follow, becauſe now under Divine Providence, which wiſely orders the world, and things in it, that theſe particles, with their ſeveral affections and motion, may give us a tolerable account of many appearances as to bodies, that therefore the univerſe had its original merely by a concretion of theſe, without

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out any Divine hand to order and direct their motion? But of this more when we come to the creation of the world; our design now is only to compare the notion of a Deity, and of the Atheist's hypothesis in point of perspicuity and evidence of reason; of which let any one who hath reason judge. Thus we see how the Atheist, in denying a Deity, must assert something else instead of it, which is pressed with the same, if not greater difficulties, and proved by far less reason. CHAP. I.

The Atheist, by the same principles on which he denies a God, must deny some things which are apparently true. Which will be evident by our running over the most plausible pretences which he insists upon. IX. 2.

1. Because the being of God cannot be demonstrated. But how doth the Atheist mean it? Is it because God cannot be demonstrated to sense, that we cannot [*digito monstrari & dicier hic est*] point at him with our fingers? It is a sign there is little of reason left, where sense is made the only umpire of all kinds of beings. Must all intellectual beings be proscribed out of the order of nature, because they cannot pass the scrutiny of sense? And by the same reason all colours shall be dashed out, because they cannot be heard; all noises silenced, because they cannot be seen? For why may not one sense be set to judge of all objects of sense with far more reason, than sense itself be set as judge over intellectual beings? But yet it is wisely done of the Atheist to make sense his judge; for if we once appeal to this, he knows our cause is lost; for as he said of a physician, when one asked him whether he had any experience of him, No, said he, *Si periculum feciſſem, non viverem*; *if I had tried him, I had been dead ere now*; so here, if God were to be tried by the judgment of sense, he must cease to be God; for how can an infinite and spiritual Being be discerned by the judgment of sense? And if he be not an infinite and spiritual Being, he is not God. But it may be the

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Atheiſt's meaning is not ſo groſs, but he intends ſuch a *demonſtration to reaſon, as that two and two make four, or that the whole is greater than the parts*; with ſuch a demonſtration he would ſit down contented. But will no leſs than this ſerve him? What becomes then of the world's being made by a fortuitous concourſe of atoms? Is this as evident as that two and two make four? And will the philoſophical Atheiſt really believe nothing in nature, but what is as evident to him in material beings as *that the whole is greater than the parts?* By any means let Atheiſts then write philoſophy, that at the laſt the clocks in London may ſtrike together, and the philoſophers agree; for I ſuppoſe none of them queſtion that. But yet it is poſſible the Atheiſt may, in a good humour, abate ſomething of this, and mean by demonſtration ſuch a proof as takes away all difficulties. If he means as to the ground of aſſent, we undertake it; if as to the object apprehended, we reject it as unreaſonable, becauſe it is impoſſible a Being infinite ſhould be comprehended by us; for if it could, it were no longer infinite. But let us try this principle by other things; and how evident is it that on this account ſome things muſt be denied which himſelf will confeſs to be true? For inſtance, that *opprobrium philoſophorum*, the diviſibility of quantity, or extended matter into finite or infinite parts; let him take which ſide he pleaſe, and ſee whether, by the force of theſe arguments on either ſide, if he hold to this principle, he muſt not be forced to deny that there is any ſuch thing as matter in the world; and then we may well have an infinite empty ſpace, when by force of this one principle both God and matter are baniſhed quite out of the world. But if the Atheiſt will but come one ſtep lower, and by his demonſtration intend nothing elſe but ſuch a ſufficient proof of it as the nature of the thing is capable of, he will not only ſpeak moſt conſonantly to reaſon, but may be in ſome hopes of gaining ſatisfaction: for it is moſt evident,

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evident, that all things are not capable of the like way of proof; and that in ſome caſes the poſſibility of the contrary muſt be no hindrance to an undoubted aſſent. What theſe proofs are, will appear afterwards. I come to the next ground of the Atheiſt's opinion; which is, CHAP. I.

2. *The weakneſs of ſome arguments brought to prove a Deity.* But let us grant that ſome arguments will not do it, doth it therefore follow that none can do it? What if ſome have proved the ſun to be the centre of the world, and the motion of the earth, by very weak arguments, will the Atheiſt therefore queſtion it? What if Epicurus hath proved his atomical hypotheſis by ſome ſilly ſophiſms, will the Atheiſt therefore rather believe the creation of the world than it? What if the Atheiſt may make himſelf ſport at ſome ſtories of apparitions, inſiſted on to prove a Deity, doth it therefore follow there is no God, becauſe ſome perſons have been over-credulous? What if ſome, having more zeal than knowledge, may attribute ſuch things to God's immediate hand, which may be produced by natural cauſes, doth it thence follow that God hath no hand in governing the world at all? What if fears, and hopes, and perſuaſions, may depend much on principles of education, muſt conſcience then be reſolved wholly into theſe? What if ſome devout melancholiſt may embrace the iſſues of his own imagination for the impreſſions of the Divine Spirit, doth it therefore follow, that religion is nothing but ſtrength of fancy, improved by principles of education? What if ſome of the numerous proofs of a Deity were cut off, and only thoſe made uſe of which are of the greateſt force, would the truth ſuffer at all by that? I grant advantage is often taken againſt a thing more by one weak argument brought for it, than for it by the ſtrongeſt proofs: but I ſay it is unreaſonable it ſhould be ſo; and were men rational and ingenuous, it would not be ſo. Many times arguments may be good in their order, but

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they are misplaced; some may prove the thing rational, which may not prove it true; some may shew the absurdities of the adversaries' rejecting the thing, which may not be sufficient to prove it. Now when men number, and not weigh their arguments, but give them in the lump to the main question, without fitting them to their several places, they do more disservice to the main of the battle by the disorder of their forces, than they can advantage it by the number of them.

3. Another great pretence the Atheist hath, is, that religion is only an invention of politicians, which they awe people with as they please; and therefore tell them of a God, and another world, as mothers send young children to school to keep them in better order, that they may govern them with the greater ease. To this I answer, 1. Religion, I grant, hath a great influence upon the well-governing the world; nay, so great, that were the Atheist's opinion true, and the world persuaded of it, it were impossible the world could be well governed. For the government of the world in civil societies depends not so much on force, as the sacred bonds of duty and allegiance, which hold a nation that owns religion as true, in far surer obligations to endeavour the peace and welfare of a nation than ever violence can do. For in this case only an opportunity is watched for to shake off that which they account a yoke upon their necks; whereas when men's minds are possessed with a sense of duty and obligation to obedience out of conscience, the reins may be held with greater ease; and yet the people be better managed by them, than by such as only gall and enrage them. So that I grant true religion to be the most serviceable principle for the governing of civil societies: but withal, I say, 2. It were impossible religion should be so much made use of for the governing of people, were there not a real propensity and inclination to religion imprinted on the minds of men. For

as,

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as, did not men love themſelves and their children, their eſtates and intereſts, it were impoſſible to keep them in obedience to laws: but doth it follow, becauſe magiſtrates perſuade people to obedience, by ſuiting laws to the general intereſt of men, that therefore the magiſtrates firſt made them love themſelves and their own concerns? So it is in religion; the magiſtrate may make uſe of this propenſity to religion in men for civil ends, but his making uſe of it doth ſuppoſe it, and not inſtill it. For were religion nothing elſe in the world but a deſign only of politicians, it would be impoſſible to keep that deſign from being diſcovered at one time or other; and when once it came to be known, it would hurry the whole world into confuſion; and the people would make no ſcruple of all oaths and obligations, but every one would ſeek to do others what miſchief he could if he had opportunity, and obey no further than fear and force conſtrained him. Therefore no principle can be ſo dangerous to a ſtate as atheiſm, nor any thing more promote its peace than true religion; and the more men are perſuaded of the truth of religion, they will be the better ſubjects, and the more uſeful in civil ſocieties. As well then may an Atheiſt ſay there is no ſuch thing as good-nature in the world, becauſe that is apt to be abuſed, nor any ſuch thing as love, becauſe that may be cheated; as that religion is nothing but a deſign, becauſe men may make it ſtalk to their private ends. Thus we ſee how the Atheiſt, by the force of thoſe principles on which he denies a God, muſt be forced to deny other things; which yet, by his own confeſſion, are apparently true.

CHAP. I.

So I come to the third propoſition, which is, *That we have as certain evidence that there is a God, as we can have, conſidering his nature.* When we demand the proof of a thing, our firſt eye muſt be to the nature of the thing which we deſire may be proved; for things equally true are not capable of equal evi-

X. Prop. 3.

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dence, nor have like manners of probation. There is no demonſtration in Euclid will ſerve to prove that there are ſuch places as the Indies. We cannot prove the earth is round by the judgment of ſenſe, nor that the ſoul is immortal by corporeal phantaſms. Every diſtinct kind of being hath its peculiar way of probation; and therefore it ought not to be at all wondered at, if the ſupreme and infinite Being have his peculiar way of demonſtrating himſelf to the minds of men. If then we have as evident proofs of the exiſtence of God as we can have, conſidering the infinity of his nature, it is all which in reaſon we can deſire; and of that kind of proofs we have theſe following: For, 1. *If God hath ſtamped an univerſal character of himſelf upon the minds of men.* 2. *If the things in the world are the manifeſt effects of infinite wiſdom, goodneſs, and power.* 3. *If there be ſuch things in the world which are unaccountable without a Deity*, then we may with ſafety and aſſurance conclude *that there is a God.*

1. *That God hath imprinted an univerſal character of himſelf on the minds of men*; and that may be known by two things. 1. *If it be ſuch as bears the ſame importance among all perſons.* 2. *If it be ſuch as cannot be miſtaken for the character of any thing elſe.*

1. I begin with the firſt, whereby I ſhall prove this character to be univerſal, becauſe the whole world hath conſented in it. This argument we may rely on with the greater ſecurity, becauſe it was the only argument which retained the Deity in the ancient ſchool of Epicurus; which, could he have thought of as eaſy a way of evading, as he thought he had found out as to the origin of the univerſe, he was no ſuch great friend to the very name of a God, as to have retained it as an anticipation or prolepſis of human nature. And this argument, from the univerſal conſent of the world, was that which bore the greateſt ſway among the philoſophers; who went by nothing but dictates of natural light, which they could

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could not ſo clearly diſcover in any things as in thoſe which all mankind did unanimouſly conſent in. Two things I ſhall make out this by. 1. *That no ſufficient account can be given of ſo univerſal a conſent, unleſs it be ſuppoſed to be the voice of nature.* 2. *That the diſſent of any particular perſons is not ſufficient to control ſo univerſal an agreement.*

1. *That no ſufficient account of it can be given, but only by aſſerting it to be a dictate of nature.* In ſo ſtrange a diſſent as there hath been in the world, concerning moſt of thoſe things which relate to mankind in common, as the models of government, the laws they are ruled by, the particular rites and cuſtoms of worſhip, we have the greateſt reaſon to judge that thoſe common principles, which were the foundations on which all theſe ſeveral different cuſtoms were built, were not the effect of any poſitive laws, nor the mere force of principles of education, but ſomething which had a deeper root and foundation in the principles of nature itſelf. A common and univerſal effect muſt flow from ſome common and univerſal cauſe. So the Stoic argues in Tully: if there were no God, *non tam ſtabilis opinio permaneret, nec confirmaretur diuturnitate temporis, nec una cum ſeculis ætatibuſque hominum inveterare potuiſſet.* It is ſtrange to think that mankind, in ſo many ages of the world, ſhould not grow wiſe enough to rid itſelf of ſo troubleſome an opinion as that was, of the being of God, had it not been true. Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. ii. c. 5.

We ſee, in all the alterations of the world, other vain opinions have been detected, refuted, and ſhaken off: if this had been ſuch, how comes it to remain the ſame in all ages and nations of the world? *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.* It is a great diſcredit to time, to make it like a river in that ſenſe; that it bears up only lighter things, when matters of greateſt weight are ſunk to the bottom, and paſt recovery. This may paſs for a handſome alluſion, as to the opinions and writings of particular perſons, but cannot be underſtood of ſuch

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things which are founded on the univerſal conſent of the world; for theſe common notions of human nature are ſo ſuited to the temper of the world, that they paſs down the ſtrong current of time with the ſame facility that a well built ſhip, though of good burthen, doth furrow the ocean. So that if we muſt adhere to the allegory, it is eaſily replied, that it is not the weight of things which makes them ſink, but the unſuitableneſs of their ſuperficies to that of the water. So we ſee a ſmall piece of wood will ſink, when a ſtately ſhip is borne up; ſo ſuch things which have not that agreeableneſs in them to the dictates of nature may ſoon be loſt; but ſuch as lie ſo even upon the ſuperficies of the ſoul will ſtill float above the water, and never be loſt in the ſwifteſt current of time. Thus we aſſert this univerſal conſent of mankind, as to the exiſtence of a Deity, to be a thing ſo conſonant to our natural reaſon, that as long as there are men in the world, it will continue.

XI. But now it is hardly conceivable, according to the principles of Epicurus, how mankind ſhould univerſally agree in ſome common ſentiments; much leſs how it ſhould have ſuch an anticipation, as himſelf grants, of the being of God. For if the ſoul be nothing elſe but ſome more active and vigorous particles of matter (as Diogenes Laertius tells us, that his opinion was, that the ſoul was nothing elſe but a *ſyſtem ἐξ ἀτόμων λειοτάτων καὶ ϛρογγυλωτάτων, of the moſt ſmooth and round atoms*); if ſo, it is very hard apprehending how any ſuch things as anticipations, or common notions, can be lodged in the ſoul; for if our ſouls be nothing elſe but ſome ſmall ſphærical corpuſcles which move up and down the body, as the Epicurean philoſophy ſuppoſeth, then all our knowledge and perception muſt depend on motion; which motion muſt be by the impreſſion of external objects: which Lucretius acknowledgeth and contends for.

Laertius, l. x. in v. Epic. v. Gaſſend. tom. ii. l. iii. ſect. 3.

Invenies

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Invenies primis a ſenſibus eſſe creatam
Notitiam veri.

Lucret. l. iv. v. 480.

If then our knowledge of truth comes in by our ſenſes, and ſenſation doth wholly depend upon the impreſſion of outward objects, what becomes of all common notions, and of the prolepſis of a Deity? Unleſs we ſuppoſe the knowledge of a Deity came in by ſenſe, which Epicurus himſelf denies, when he attributes to the Deity, not *corpus*, but *quaſi corpus*, as Tully tells us, and therefore he is not a proper object of ſenſe. So that it is impoſſible there ſhould be any ſuch thing as a natural notion, which may be the ground of univerſal conſent among men, according to the doctrine of Epicurus; and therefore it ſtands to all reaſon in the world, that, if our ſenſes be the only competent judges of truth, men ſhould differ about nothing more than ſuch things which cannot be tried by the judgment of ſenſe; ſuch as the notion of a God is (for where ſhould men be more uncertain in their judgments, than in ſuch things which they have no rule at all to go by in the judging of?) but we are ſo far from finding it ſo, that men are nothing ſo much agreed about the objects of ſenſe, as they are about the exiſtence of a Deity; and therefore we ſee this univerſal conſent of mankind, concerning a God, cannot be ſalved by the principles of thoſe who deny it; according to which no account at all can be given of any ſuch things as univerſal or common notions.

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i.

XII. Neither can this univerſal conſent of mankind be enervated with any greater probability by thoſe Atheiſts who aſſert the eternity of the world, and reſolve this conſent wholly into mere tradition; ſuch as the fables of poets were conveyed in from one to another. For I demand, concerning this tradition, whether ever it had any beginning or no? If it had no beginning, it could be no tradition; for that muſt run up to ſome perſons from whom it firſt came. Again, if

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if it had no beginning, it was neceſſary that it ſhould always be on the ſame accounts on which they make the world eternal. And if it be neceſſary, it muſt be antecedent to any free act of man's will which tradition ſuppoſeth; and ſo ſome falſe opinion would be found to be as neceſſary as the world's being eternal (and by conſequence the world's being eternal may be a neceſſary falſe opinion): but if any falſe opinion be once granted neceſſary, it then follows that our faculties are not true, and that nature is a neceſſary cauſe of ſome notorious falſity; which is the higheſt impeachment the Atheiſt could have laid upon his only adored nature; which muſt then have done that which Ariſtotle was aſhamed to think ever nature ſhould be guilty of, which is ſomething in vain; for to what purpoſe ſhould man have rational faculties, if he be under an unavoidable neceſſity of being deceived? If then it be granted that this tradition had once a beginning, either it began with human nature, or human nature did exiſt long before it. If it began with mankind, then mankind had a beginning, and ſo the world was not eternal; if mankind did exiſt before this tradition, I then enquire in what time, and by what means, came this tradition firſt to be embraced, if it doth not ſuppoſe the exiſtence of a Deity? Can any age be mentioned in hiſtory, wherein this tradition was not univerſally received? And, which is moſt to our purpoſe, the further we go back in hiſtory, the fuller the world was of deities, if we believe the Heathen hiſtories; but however no age can be inſtanced in, wherein this tradition began firſt to be believed in the world. We can trace the poetic fables to their true original, by the teſtimonies of thoſe who believed them; we know the particular authors of them, and what courſe they took in divulging of them; we find great diverſities among themſelves in the meaning of them, and many nations that never heard of them. But all things are quite otherwiſe in this tradition; we have none to

to fix on as the firſt authors of it. If the world were eternal, and the belief of a Deity fabulous, we cannot underſtand by what artifice a fabulous tradition could come to be ſo univerſally received in the world, that no nation of old could be inſtanced in by the inquiſitive philoſophers, but however rude and barbarous it was, yet it owned a deity. How could ſuch a tradition be ſpread ſo far, but either by force or fraud? It could not be by force, becauſe embraced by an unanimous conſent, where no force at all hath been uſed; and hath been ſo rooted in the very natures of thoſe people who have been moſt tender of their liberties, that they have reſented no indignity ſo highly, as any affronts they conceived to be offered to their gods. Nay, and where any perſons ſeem to quit the belief of a Deity, we find what force and violence they have uſed to their own reaſon and conſcience, to bring themſelves to atheiſm, which they could not ſubdue their minds to any longer than the will could command the underſtanding; which, when it gained but a little liberty to examine itſelf, or view the world, or was alarmed with thunder, earthquakes, or violent ſickneſs, did bring back again the ſenſe of a Deity with greater force and power than they had endeavoured to ſhake it off with. Now had this tradition come by force into the world, there would have been a ſecret exultation of mind to be freed from it; as we ſee nature rejoiceth to ſhake off every thing which is violent, and to ſettle every thing according to its due order. It is only fraud, then, which can be with any reaſon imagined in this caſe; and how unreaſonable it is to imagine it here, will appear to any one who doth conſider how extremely jealous the world is of being impoſed upon by the ſubtlety of ſuch who are thought to be the greateſt politicians. For the very opinion of their ſubtlety makes them apt to ſuſpect a deſign in every thing they ſpeak or do; ſo that nothing doth more generally hinder the entertaining of any

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any motion ſo much among vulgar people, as that it comes from a perſon reputed very politic. So that the moſt politic way of gaining upon the apprehenſions of the vulgar, is by taking upon one the greateſt appearance of ſimplicity and integrity; and this now could not be done by ſuch politicians which we now ſpeak of, but by accommodating themſelves to ſuch things in the people, which were ſo conſonant to their natures, that they could ſuſpect no deſign at all in the matters propounded to them. And thus I aſſert it to have been in the preſent caſe, in all thoſe politic governors who at firſt brought the world into both civil and religious ſocieties, after they were grown rude and barbarous; for as it had been impoſſible to have brought them into civil ſocieties, unleſs there had been ſuppoſed an inclination to ſociety in them, ſo it had been equally impoſſible to have brought them to embrace any particular way of religion, unleſs there had been a natural propenſity to religion implanted in them, and founded in the general belief of the exiſtence of a Deity. And therefore we never find any of the ancient founders of commonwealths go about to perſuade the people that there was a God; but this they ſuppoſed, and made their advantage of it, the better to draw the people on to embrace that way of worſhip, which they delivered to them as moſt ſuitable to their own deſign. And this is plainly evident in the vaſt difference of deſigns and intereſts which were carried on in the Heathen world, upon this general apprehenſion of a Deity. How came the world to be ſo eaſily abuſed into religions of all ſhapes and faſhions, had not there been a natural inclination in men's ſouls to religion, and an indelible idea of a Deity on the minds of men? Were then this propenſity groundleſs, and this idea fictitious, it were the greateſt ſlur imaginable which could be caſt upon nature, that, when the inſtincts of irrational agents argue ſomething real in them, only man, the moſt noble being

being of the visible world, must be fatally carried to the belief of that which never was. Which yet hath so great a force and awe upon man, that nothing creates so great anxieties in his life as this doth; nothing lays him more open to the designs of any who have an intent to abuse him. But yet further: these politicians who first abused the world, in telling them there was a God, did they themselves believe there was a God or no? If they did, then they had no such end as abusing the world into such a belief; if they did not, upon what accounts did they believe there was none, when the people were so ready to believe there was one? Was that as certain a tradition before that there was no God, as afterwards they made it to be that there was? If so, then all those people whom they persuaded to believe there was a God, did before all believe there was none; and how can it possibly enter into the reason of any man to think that people who had been brought up in the belief that there was no God at all, nor any state after this life, should all unanimously quit the principles of education which tended so much to their ease and pleasure here, to believe there was a God and another life, and thereby to fill themselves full of fears and disquietments, merely because their rulers told them so? Again, if these rulers themselves were so wise as not to believe a Deity, can we imagine there ever was such an age of the world, wherein it fell out so happily that only the rulers were wise, and all the subjects fools? But it may be, it will be said, *that all who were wise themselves did not believe a Deity, but yet consented to the practice of religion, because it was so useful for the government of mankind:* but can it be thought that all these wise men, which we must suppose of several ranks and degrees (for philosophers are not always statesmen, nor statesmen philosophers) should so readily concur in such a thing, which tended most to the interest of the prince, and to the abuse of the world? Would none of them be ready to

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to assert the truth, though it were but to make a party of their own, and discover to the people that it was only the ambition and design of their governors which sought to bring the people to slavery by the belief of such things, which were contrary to the tradition of their forefathers, and would make their lives, if they believed them, continually troublesome and unquiet? Or if we could suppose things should hit thus in one nation, what is this to the whole world, which the Atheist here supposeth eternal? What, did all the rulers of the world exactly agree in one moment of time, or at least in one age, thus to abuse the world? Did the designs of governors, and the credulity of all people, fall out to be so suitable together? But, on the contrary, we do not find that governors can have the judgments of people so at their command, that they can make them to believe what they please. If it were so, we may well say with the atheistical Pope, *Heu quam minimo regitur mundus*; *what a twine thread will rule the world!* But granting these things (which any but an Atheist will say are impossible), yet whence should it come to pass that the world, which is generally led more by the opinions of their forefathers than by reason, should so cancel that former tradition that there was no God, that no remaining footsteps of it can be traced in any history of those times? Or did the governors all consent to abolish all records of it? Public and written I grant they might; but not those out of men's minds and memories, which would have been, for the ease of the minds of their posterity, conveyed in some secret *cabala* from fathers to their children. It may be, it will be said, *so it was, but men durst not profess it for fear of the laws:* but it is not evident that the laws of all the ancient commonwealths were so severe against atheism; and withal, how came some of the wisest and most philosophical men of Greece and Rome to embrace the existence of a Deity, as a thing far more consonant to reason than the contrary

trary opinion, and eſtabliſhed their belief on ſuch evidences from nature itſelf, that none of their antagoniſts were able to anſwer them? It was not certainly the fear of laws which made men rational and inquiſitive into the natures and cauſes of things; and yet thoſe who were ſuch amidſt the great idolatries of the Heathen, and being deſtitute of Divine revelation, yet freely and firmly aſſented to the exiſtence of a Deity. Had it been only fraud and impoſture which brought men to believe a God, whence came it to paſs that this fraud was not diſcovered by theſe philoſophers, who were far better able, by their nearneſs to thoſe eldeſt times, and much converſe abroad in other nations (for ſome travelled into Egypt, Chaldea, Perſia, India, merely to gain knowledge), to have found out ſuch an impoſture, had it been ſuch, than any of our modern Atheiſts? Whence come theſe now, in this almoſt decrepit age of the world, to be the firſt ſmellers out of ſo great a deſign? By what means, what tokens and evidence came ſuch an impoſture to their knowledge? Becauſe, forſooth, the world is ſtill apt to be abuſed by a pretence of religion; but he that doth not ſee how ſilly and ridiculous a ſophiſm that is, either by his own reaſon, or by what hath gone before, hath wit and reaſon little enough to be an Atheiſt. Some, therefore, who would ſeem a little wiſer than the vulgar ſort of Atheiſts (for it ſeems there is a *vulgus* among them too, I wiſh it be more for their meanneſs than multitude), are ſo far convinced of the unreaſonableneſs of judging that the belief of a Deity came in by fraud, that, finding it ſo general and univerſal, they attribute it to as general and univerſal a cauſe; which is the influence of the ſtars. So true ſtill is that of the poet, *cælum ipſum petimus ſtultitia*; for by what imaginable influence come the ſtars to plant opinions in men's minds ſo deeply and univerſally? But yet further: is this opinion, which is thus cauſed by the ſtars, true or falſe? If the opinion be true, we have

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XIII. The only thing then left for him is, to deny the truth of the thing, viz. that there is such an universal consent; because some persons have been found in the world who have not agreed with the rest of mankind in this opinion. To this I answer (which was the second particular for clearing this argument), that the dissent of these persons is not sufficient to manifest the consent not to be universal, and to arise from a dictate of nature: for I demand of the greatest Atheist, whether it be sufficient to say that it is not natural for men to have two legs, because some have been born with one; or that it is not natural for men to desire life (which the Atheist loves so dearly), because there have been so many who have taken away their own lives? If it be said, that these are monsters and anomalies in nature, and therefore not to be reckoned in the regular account of things, the same

ſame I may with as great reaſon ſay of Atheiſts, that they are to be diſpunged out of the *cenſus* of ſuch who act upon free principles of reaſon; becauſe there may be ſome peculiar reaſons given of their diſſent from the reſt of mankind in the denial of a Deity. We ſee by the old philoſophers how far the affectation of novelty, and ambition of being cried up for no vulgar wits, may carry men to deny ſuch things, which are moſt common and obvious in the world. Is there any thing more plain and evident to reaſon, than that it implies a contradiction for the ſame thing to be and not to be at the ſame time? And yet if we believe Ariſtotle, who largely diſputes againſt them, εἰσὶ δέ τινες οἱ αὐτοί τε ἐνδέχεσθαί φασι τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι. *There were ſome who affirmed that a thing might be and not be at the ſame time.* What ſo evident in nature as motion? Yet the philoſopher is well known who diſputed againſt it, and thought himſelf ſubtle in doing ſo too. What are men more aſſured of than that they live; and yet (if it be not too dogmatical, even in that to believe the Sceptics) it was a thing none could be aſſured of? What are our ſenſes more aſſured of than that the ſnow is white? Yet all the philoſophers were not of that opinion. Is this then ſufficient reaſon on which to deny an univerſal conſent, becauſe ſome philoſophers oppoſed it, when it is moſt undoubtedly true, which Tully ſharply ſpeaks of the ancient philoſophers, *Nihil tam abſurdum quod non dixerit aliquis philoſophorum; there was no abſurdity ſo great, but it found a philoſopher to vouch it!* But in this caſe thoſe philoſophers who queſtioned the exiſtence of a Deity, though they were not for number to be compared with thoſe who aſſerted it, yet were not ſo inexcuſable therein as our modern Atheiſts, becauſe they then knew no other way of religion, but that which was joined with horrible ſuperſtition, and ridiculous rites of worſhip. They were ſtrangers to any thing of Divine revelation, or to any real miracles wrought to confirm it;

Ariſt. Metaphyſ. l. iv. c. 4.

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. iii.

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BOOK III. and to such a way of serving God which is most agreeable to the Divine nature, most suitable to our reason, most effectual for advancing true godliness in the world. And although this most excellent religion, viz. the Christian, be subject to many scandals, by reason of the corruptions which have been mixed with it by those who have professed it, yet the religion itself is clear and untainted; being with great integrity preserved in the sacred records of it. So that now atheism hath far less to plead for itself, than it had in the midst of the ignorance and superstition of the Heathen idolatries. But if we should grant the Atheist more than he can prove, that the number of such who denied a Deity hath been great in all ages of the world, is it probable they should speak the sense of nature, whose opinion, if it were embraced, would dissolve all ties and obligations whatsoever, would let the world loose to the highest licentiousness without check or control, and would in time overturn all civil societies? For, as Tully hath largely shewn, *Take away the being and providence of God out of the world, and there follows nothing but perturbation and confusion in it; not only all sanctity, piety, and devotion is destroyed, but all faith, virtue, and human societies too*; which are impossible to be upheld without religion, as not only he, but Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch, have fully demonstrated. Shall such persons, then, who hold an opinion so contrary to all other dictates of nature, rather speak the sense of nature, than they who have asserted the belief of a Deity, which tends so much to advance nature, to regulate the world, and to reform the lives of men? Certainly if it were not a dictate of nature that there was a God, it is impossible to conceive the world should be so constant in the belief of him, when the thoughts of him breed so many anxieties in men's minds; and withal, since God is neither obvious to sense, nor his nature comprehensible by human reason: which is a stronger evidence it is a character of

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. & de Legib. l. ii.

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of himſelf which God hath imprinted on the minds of men, which makes them ſo unanimouſly agree that he is, when they can neither ſee him, nor yet fully comprehend him. For any whole nation which have conſented in the denial of a Deity, we have no evidence at all. Some ſuſpicions, it is true, there were at firſt, concerning ſome very barbarous people in America; but it is ſince evident, though they are groſsly miſtaken as to the nature of God, yet they worſhip ſomething inſtead of him, ſuch as the *Toupinamboults*, *Caribes*, *Patagons*, *Tapuiæ*, and others; of the laſt of which Voſſius, from one Chriſtophorus Arciſſewſki, a Polonian gentleman, who was among them, hath given a large account of their religion, and the manner of their worſhipping of their gods, both good and bad. And that which among theſe Indians much confirms our preſent argument is, that only thoſe who have been the moſt barbarous and ſavage nations, have been ſuſpected of irreligion, but the more civilized they have been, the more evident their ſenſe of religion. The Peruvians worſhip one chief God, whom they call *Virachocha* and *Pachacamak*, which is as much as *The Creator of heaven and earth*. And of the religion of the Mexicans, Lipſius and others ſpeak. So that the nearer any have approached to civility and knowledge, the more ready they have been to own a Deity; and none have had ſo little ſenſe of it as they who are almoſt degenerated to brutes; and whether of theſe two now comes nearer to reaſon, let any one who hath it judge.

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Voſſius Addend. ad l. i. de Idol p. 2.

Vid. Acoſtam, l. v. c. 5. Lipſ. Mon. & Exempl. Politic.

Another great evidence, that God hath imprinted a character or idea of himſelf on the minds of men, is, *becauſe ſuch things are contained in this idea of God, which do neceſſarily imply his exiſtence.* The main force of this argument lies in this: *That which we do clearly and diſtinctly perceive to belong to the nature and eſſence of a thing, may be with truth affirmed of the thing*; not that it may be affirmed with truth to belong to the nature of the thing, for that were an empty tauto-

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logy; but it may be affirmed with truth of the thing itſelf; as if I clearly perceive, upon exact enquiry, that to be an animal doth belong to the nature of man, I may with truth affirm that man is a living creature; if I find it demonſtrably true that a triangle hath three angles equal to two right ones, then I may truly affirm it of any triangle. But now we aſſume, that, upon the moſt exact ſearch and enquiry, I clearly perceive that neceſſary exiſtence doth immutably belong to the nature of God; therefore I may with as much truth affirm that God exiſts, as that man is a living creature, or a triangle hath three angles equal to two right ones. But becauſe many are ſo apt to ſuſpect ſome kind of ſophiſm in this argument, when it is managed from the idea in men's minds, becauſe that ſeems to imply only an objective reality in the mind, and that nothing can be thence inferred as to the exiſtence of the thing whoſe idea it is; I therefore ſhall endeavour to manifeſt more clearly the force of this argument, by proving ſeverally the ſuppoſitions which it ſtands upon; which are theſe three: 1. *That clear and diſtinct perception of the mind is the greateſt evidence we can have of the truth of any thing.* 2. *That we have this clear perception that neceſſary exiſtence doth belong to the nature of God.* 3. *That if neceſſary exiſtence doth belong to God's nature, it unavoidably follows that he doth exiſt.* Nothing can be deſired more plain or full to demonſtrate the force of this argument, than by proving every one of theſe.

1. *That the greateſt evidence we can have of the truth of a thing, is a clear and diſtinct perception of it in our minds.* For otherwiſe the rational faculties of man's ſoul would be wholly uſeleſs, as being not fitted for any end at all, if upon a right uſe of them men were ſtill liable to be deceived. I grant the imperfection of our minds in this preſent ſtate is very great, which makes us ſo obnoxious to error and miſtake; but then that imperfection lies in the proneneſs in man's mind to be led by intereſt and prejudice in the judgment

ment of things; but in such things as are purely speculative and rational, if the mind cannot be certain it is not deceived in them, it can have no certainty at all of any mathematical demonstrations. Now we find in our own minds a clear and convincing evidence in some things, as soon as they are propounded to our understandings; as that a *thing can be and not be at the same time*; that *a non-entity can have no proper attributes*; that *while I reason and discourse, I am:* these are so clear, that no man doth suspect himself deceived at all in them. Besides, if we had no ground of certainty at all in our judging things, to what purpose is there an idea of true and false in our minds, if it be impossible to know the one from the other? But I say not that in all perceptions of the mind we have certain evidence of truth, but only in such as are clear and distinct; that is, when, upon the greatest consideration of the nature of a thing, there appears no ground or reason at all to doubt concerning it: and this must suppose the mind's abstraction wholly from the senses; for we plainly find, that while we attend to them, we may judge ourselves very certain, and yet be deceived; as those who have an icterism in their eyes, may judge with much confidence that they see things as clearly and distinctly as any other doth. Besides, there are many things taken for granted by men, which have no evidence of reason at all in them. Now if men will judge of the truth of things by such principles, no wonder if they be deceived. But when we speak of clear and distinct perception, we suppose the mind to proceed upon evident principles of reason, or to have such notions of things, which, as far as we can perceive by the light of reason, do agree with the natures of the things we apprehend. If in such things, then, there be no ground of certainty, it is as much as to say our faculties are to no purpose; which highly reflects either upon God or nature. It is a noble question as any is in philosophy, What is the certain κριτήριον of

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the truth of things, or what ground of certainty the mind hath to proceed upon in its judgment of the truth of ſuch objects as are repreſented to it? Nothing can render the philoſophy of Epicurus more juſtly ſuſpected, to any rational and inquiſitive mind, than his making the ſenſes the only conveyers of the truth of things to the mind. The ſenſes, I grant, do not in themſelves deceive any; but if I make the impreſſions of ſenſe to be the only rule for the mind to judge by of the truth of things, I make way for the greateſt impoſtures, and the moſt erring judgments. For if my mind affirms every thing to be in its proper nature according to that idea which the imagination hath received from the impreſſions upon the organs of ſenſe, it will be impoſſible for me ever to underſtand the right natures of things: becauſe the natures of things may remain the ſame, when all thoſe things in them which affect the organs of ſenſe may be altered; and becauſe the various motion and configuration of the particles of matter may make ſuch an impreſſion upon the ſenſes, which may cauſe an idea in us of that in the things themſelves, which yet may be only in the manner of ſenſation; as ſome philoſophers ſuppoſe it to be in heat and cold. Now if the mind judgeth of the nature of things according to thoſe ideas which come from the impreſſions made upon the organs of ſenſe, how is it poſſible it ſhould ever come to a right judgment of the natures of things? So that, in reference even to the groſſeſt material beings, it muſt be the perception only of the mind which can truly inform us of their proper nature and eſſence. Beſides, there are many ideas of things in the mind of man which are capable to have properties demonſtrated of them, which never owed their original to our ſenſes; and were never imported to the mind at the keys of the ſenſes. Such are moſt mathematical figures, which have their peculiar properties and demonſtrations; ſuch are all the mutual reſpects of things to each other, which may be as certain

certain and evident to the mind as itſelf is. Now it is plain by this, that all certainty of knowledge is not conveyed by the ſenſes; but our trueſt way of certain underſtanding the nature of any thing, is by the clear and diſtinct perception of the mind, which is founded on the truth of our faculties; and that however we may be deceived when we do not make a right uſe of our reaſon, becauſe of the imperfection of our preſent ſtate; yet if we ſay our minds may be deceived when things are evident and clear to them upon plain principles of reaſon, it is highly to reflect upon that God who gave men rational faculties, and made them capable of diſcerning truth from falſehood. CHAP. I.

2. *That we have clear and diſtinct perception that neceſſity of exiſtence doth belong to the nature of God.* For which we are to conſider the vaſt difference which there is in our notion of the nature of God, and of the nature of any other being. In all other beings, I grant we may abſtract eſſence and exiſtence from each other; now if I can make it appear that there is evident reaſon, *ex parte rei*, why I cannot do it in the notion of God, then it will be more plain that neceſſity of exiſtence doth immutably belong to his nature. It is manifeſt to our reaſon, that, in all other beings which we apprehend the natures of, nothing elſe can be implied in the natures of them beyond bare poſſibility of exiſtence; no, although the things which we do apprehend do really exiſt; becauſe, in forming an idea of a thing, we abſtract from every thing which is not implied in the very nature of the thing. Now exiſtence being contingent and poſſible as to any other being, it cannot be any ingredient of its idea, becauſe it doth not belong to its eſſence; for we may fully apprehend the nature of the thing, without attributing exiſtence to it. But now in our conception of a Being abſolutely perfect, bare poſſibility or contingency of exiſtence ſpeaks a direct repugnancy to the idea of him; for

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how can we conceive that Being abſolutely perfect, which may want that which gives life to all other perfections, which is exiſtence? The only ſcruple which men's minds are ſubject to in apprehending the force of this argument, lies in this, *Whether this neceſſary exiſtence doth really belong to the nature of that Being whoſe idea it is, or elſe it be only a mode of our conception in apprehending God?* For clearing of this, we muſt conſider by what certain rules we can know when the compoſition of things together in the underſtanding doth depend upon the mere operation of the mind, and when they do belong to the things themſelves, and their immutable nature. For which we have no rule ſo certain and evident as this is, that in thoſe things which depend merely on the act of the mind joining together, the underſtanding cannot only abſtract one thing from another, but may really divide them in its conceptions from each other; but in ſuch things which cannot be divided from each other, but the eſſence of the thing is quite altered, it is a certain evidence that thoſe things were not conjoined by the mere act of the mind, but do immutably belong to the natures of the things themſelves. As for inſtance, when I conceive a triangle inſcribed in a ſquare, a man walking, a horſe with wings, it is evident I may underſtand the natures of all theſe things without theſe affections of them; becauſe I can fully apprehend the nature of a triangle without imagining a ſquare, a man without walking, a horſe without wings; thence it neceſſarily follows, that the joining of theſe things together was merely an act of the mind. But now I cannot conceive a triangle not to have three angles equal to two right ones, nor a man that hath not rationality belonging to him: for if I divide theſe attributes from them, I deſtroy their natures; and therefore the joining of theſe together is not any mere act of the mind; but theſe are ſuch things as are implied in the very notion of them, and therefore immutably belongs to them. So now,

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now, when I conceive the notion of a body, I can imagine all perfections belonging to it, without conceiving it neceſſarily to exiſt; for it may be a body ſtill, though it hath not its being from itſelf: but when I conceive a Being abſolutely perfect, it is impoſſible to imagine it ſhould have its being from any other; and if it be from itſelf, it muſt of neceſſity exiſt. For though the mind ſtill be apt to doubt whether exiſtence in this idea be only a mode of cogitation, yet that doubt may be eaſily removed, if the mind doth but attend to this, that at leaſt poſſibility of exiſtence doth belong to all thoſe beings which we have a clear idea of in our minds; and the reaſon why we attribute bare poſſibility to them, is becauſe we apprehend ſome reaſon in our minds which keeps us from attributing neceſſity of exiſtence to them, as that it is not implied in its nature, or that it doth depend on ſome other Being, or that it wants infinite power, &c. Now all theſe reaſons, which make us attribute bare poſſibility of exiſtence to any Being, are taken away, when we conceive a Being abſolutely perfect; for then exiſtence is implied among the number of perfections; and this Being is independent upon all others, and infinitely powerful, ſo that nothing can hinder its exiſtence; and therefore we muſt conclude, that neceſſity of exiſtence doth immutably belong to the nature and notion of God, and is not any mode only of our conception; becauſe if we take away neceſſity of exiſtence from God, we loſe the notion of a Being abſolutely perfect.

The third thing, *That if neceſſary exiſtence belongs to the nature of God, he doth exiſt*, not only follows as a neceſſary concluſion from the other two, as the premiſes, but is in itſelf evident to any one's reaſon; for it implies no leſs than a contradiction for a Being to exiſt neceſſarily, and yet it be queſtionable, whether it doth exiſt or no? Thus much, I ſuppoſe, may ſuffice here to explain and enforce this argument. If

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any are yet unſatisfied, I refer them to thoſe judicious authors, who have made it their peculiar buſineſs to manage it, and vindicate it from all objections: which falls in only here as an evidence that God hath imprinted a character of himſelf on the minds of men, ſeeing we have ſo clear and diſtinct an idea of ſuch a Being, from whom if we take away neceſſity of exiſtence, we deſtroy that notion which our minds have of an abſolutely perfect Being. This is the firſt way whereby we can conceive an infinite Being may make himſelf known to mankind, by imprinting an indelible character of himſelf upon the ſoul; which can be attributed to none beſides himſelf, without doing manifeſt violence to our own faculties, and ſuſpecting ourſelves deceived in things which are moſt clear and evident to us.

Vid. Des Cartes Metaphyſ. Medit. & Reſp. ad Object. D. H. More Antidote againſt Atheiſm, l. i. ch. 8. Append. ch. 5, 6, 7.

XV. I come to the ſecond evidence which God hath given us of his own exiſtence; which is the mark and *impreſſion which he hath left of an infinite wiſdom and counſel, in the appearances which are in nature.* There needs no great criticiſm to find out the true Author of all the works of nature; the works themſelves ſhew the author as plainly, as if his effigies were drawn upon them. If the great curioſity and contrivance of any artificial engine ſpeak the excellency of the mechanical wit of the framer of it, what ridiculous folly will it be to impute that rare mechaniſm of the works of nature to the blind and fortuitous motion of ſome particles of matter? Suppoſe a multitude of letters, caſually thrown together, ſhould fall ſo handſomely in order that we might read in them the names of Troja, Juno, Æneas, Dido, Turnus, Aſcanius, or the like, is it poſſible for any to imagine that ever they ſhould reach the grandeur, ſtyle, matter, and accuracy of the whole books of the Æneids? So granting, that now matter, being ſet in motion by a Divine power, may, by its continual agitation, at laſt produce ſome of the appearances of nature, yet what is this to the whole univerſe, or the admirable contrivance

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trivance of any one part in it? If theſe things had been the reſult of mere matter and motion, when once the particles of matter had been ſo united and ſettled together as to produce any one ſpecies of animals in the world (which it is almoſt unconceivable they ſhould), yet we cannot think, that, if there had been but ſymmetry of parts enough for it merely to ſubſiſt itſelf, and propagate more, there could have been any further attempt made by thoſe atoms, which had been once ſettled in a determinate figure. How came it then to paſs that there is not any one ſpecies of animals in the world, but what hath ſuch an order, ſymmetry, and contrivance of parts, which ſpeaks more than mere neceſſity of ſubſiſtence; and therefore ſpeaks them to be the effect of a ſupreme Governor of the world, and not the products of mere matter? Is it poſſible that any, who is not beforehand reſolved to exclude a Deity, ſhould imagine that any particles of matter ſhould fall into the exact form, order, motion, and ſerviceableneſs to the world, which the heavenly bodies are in, without Divine counſel and wiſdom diſpoſing of them? Tully tells us of a ſpeech of Ariſtotle, to this purpoſe. *If we could ſuppoſe perſons to have lived in ſome caverns of the earth, and to have enjoyed every thing there of pleaſure and riches, or whatever it is which we think makes men's lives happy, and had never been abroad upon the ſurface of the earth, but had only had ſome obſcure report of an infinite Power and Being; and that afterwards theſe perſons ſhould, by an opening of the caverns wherein they were, come abroad into theſe parts of the world, and ſhould ſuddenly behold the earth, ſea, and the heavens, and obſerve the vaſtneſs of the clouds, and violence of winds, and behold the bigneſs, beauty, and influence of the ſun, and how the day depended upon his preſence; and upon his withdrawing ſhould view the face of the heavens again* (as it were the *ſecond courſe* of nature), *the order and ornament of the ſtars, the varieties of the light of the moon, their riſing and ſetting, and their fixed and immoveable*

Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. ii. c. 95.

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immoveable courſes; they could not hold from believing there was a Deity, and that theſe were the effects of his power. So vaſtly different are the free and natural emanations of our ſouls, from that which we force and ſtrain out of ourſelves by diſtorting and wringing thoſe free principles of reaſon which God hath given us, when a few ſorry experiments, and ſome arbitrary hypotheſes, muſt make us form other conceptions of things, than the majeſty, order, and beauty of them do naturally ſuggeſt to us. We ſee, when once we can but abſtract our minds from thoſe prejudices which continual converſation with the world brings upon us, by that ſpeech of Ariſtotle, how readily our minds will frame an excellent commentary upon thoſe words of the royal Pſalmiſt, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſhews his handy-work.* To which purpoſe likewiſe thoſe words of the excellent orator himſelf, in another place, are very obſervable. *Quid eſt enim verius quam neminem eſſe oportere tam ſtulte arrogantem, ut in ſe mentem & rationem putet ineſſe, in cælo mundoque non putet? aut ea quæ vix ſumma ingenii ratione comprehendat, nulla ratione moveri putat? Quem vero aſtrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque viciſſitudines, quem menſium temperatio, quemque ea, quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non gratum eſſe cogant, hunc hominem omnino numerare qui dicet? What monſtrous arrogancy would it be in any man to think there is a mind and reaſon in himſelf, and that there is none in the world? Or to think thoſe things are moved without reaſon and underſtanding, which all that he hath is ſcarce able to comprehend? Neither can he deſerve the name of a man, from whom the obſervation of the courſes of the ſtars, the ſucceſſion and order of ſeaſons, and the innumerable benefits which he enjoys in the world, doth not extort gratitude towards that Being which ordered all theſe things.* What a low opinion, then, had thoſe more refined and generous ſpirits, who went only upon principles of pure and undiſtorted reaſon, of thoſe mean and ignoble ſouls which were inclined to atheiſm; eſpecially then, when

Cicero de Legibus, l. ii. c. 16.

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when religion was ſo abuſed, that it was true of the wiſeſt of them, what one ſaid of Eraſmus, *Magis habuit quid fugeret quam quid ſequeretur*, they knew what to avoid, but not what they ſhould embrace. And yet, when they ſaw ſo much into the folly and ſuperſtition of Heathen worſhip, they ſaw the greateſt reaſon ſtill to adhere to the belief of a Deity, as may be clearly ſeen, eſpecially in the ſecond of thoſe excellent dialogues of Tully, *De Natura Deorum*, where this particular argument to prove a Deity, from the admirable contrivance of the works of nature, is managed with a great deal of eloquence and reaſon, and by particular enumeration of moſt conſiderable parts of the univerſe. So unbecoming a late philoſopher was that reaſon of his, why he waved the argument from the conſideration of the world to infer a Deity, becauſe the ends of God are unſearchable, as flowing from his infinite wiſdom. For, what though God may conceal ſome things from men which he intends, and are of no concernment for men to know, muſt therefore, of neceſſity, thoſe ends of his be unſearchable in his works of creation, which refer ſo immediately to the advantage of life, and tend ſo much to the veneration of the Deity?

XVI. Nay, the peculiar uſe and ſerviceableneſs of many parts of the univerſe, eſpecially of animals, and chiefly of man, is ſo evident, that this hath been the main argument which hath induced ſome, otherwiſe atheiſtical enough, to acknowledge and adore a Deity. And although the Epicureans be lamentably puzzled to give any tolerable account of many other appearances in nature, yet they no where diſcover ſo much weakneſs and ignorance, as when they come to diſcourſe *de uſu partium*, about the contrivance of the parts of man's body. Whoſe opinion is thus briefly delivered by Lucretius:

Nil ideo quoniam natum'ſt in corpore, ut uti
Poſſemus; ſed quod natum'ſt, id procreat uſum.

Lucret. l. iv. v. 833.

i. e.

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i. e. *that no parts of man's body were deſigned for that uſe which they are employed for; but the parts, by chance, fell into that form they are in, and men by degrees brought them to their preſent uſe and ſerviceableneſs.* An opinion, at firſt view, ſo ſtrangely unreaſonable, that we cannot think Epicurus ſhould have ever embraced it, had it not unavoidably followed upon his hypotheſis of all things in the univerſe reſulting only from a fortuitous concourſe of atoms: according to which he ſuppoſed in man a different configuration of parts would happen, from the various agitation and concretion of thoſe little particles which at firſt run together in the faſhion of a man; and becauſe that man had in him a more florid and vivacious ſpirit, made up of the moſt ſubtle and moveable atoms, thence motion came into the ſeveral parts ſuitable to the different conformation of them. And becauſe thoſe atoms of which the ſoul is compoſed are capable of ſenſation, thence it comes to paſs that it ſees in the eye, hears in the ear, and ſmells in the noſtrils. This is the moſt which is made of the opinion of Epicurus by the late ſedulous vindicator of him, which yet himſelf calls *intoleranda opinio*; and it will appear to be ſo, not only as contradicting what God himſelf hath delivered concerning man, but what reaſon itſelf will eaſily ſuggeſt, from the conſideration of the ſeveral parts of man's body. It muſt be confeſſed, there were ſome philoſophers older than Epicurus, who were much inclined to this opinion, as Democritus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and others; yet we find thoſe who more narrowly ſearched into the natures of living creatures, were thereby brought to acknowledge a Divine Providence, which with a great deal of wiſdom did order the ſeveral parts of animals, and adapted them to their peculiar uſes. And although Ariſtotle, in his book *de Partibus Animalium*, hath ſaid enough to refute the fond opinion of thoſe philoſophers, yet none hath handled this argument with more exactneſs and accuracy, and with a more

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a more peculiar reflection on Epicurus, than Galen hath done in his excellent piece *de Uſu Partium*; which Gaſſendus thinks Galen wrote with a kind of enthuſiaſm upon him (*adeo totum opus videtur conſcriptum* ἐνθουσιαστικῶς); and ſo all thoſe ſeventeen books of his on that ſubject, are a kind of 119th pſalm in philoſophy, or a perpetual hymn upon the praiſe of the great Creator; a juſt commentary on thoſe words of the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm cxxxix. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well.* In the entrance of thoſe books, Galen firſt ſhews the great variety of parts which is in ſeveral animals ſuitable to their ſeveral natures. The horſe, becauſe of his ſwiftneſs and pride, hath the ſtrongeſt hoofs and moſt curled mane; the lion, becauſe of his fierceneſs and courage, hath his ſtrength lying in his teeth and paws; the bull in his horns; the boar in his tuſks; the hart and hare being timorous creatures, their parts are made fitteſt for flight: but man, becauſe he hath a principle of reaſon in him, hath no defenſive or offenſive weapons in his body, but he hath hands to make uſe of both; which being joined with, and employed by his reaſon, far exceed all thoſe advantages which any other creatures have; being employed not only to defend himſelf, but to build houſes, make clothes, arms and nets, whatever is uſeful for himſelf, or hurtful to thoſe creatures which he hath command over: but becauſe man was made for ſociety and civil converſe, therefore his hands were not only employed to defend himſelf or hurt other creatures, but for the mutual benefit and advantage of mankind; for by theſe were laws written, temples built, all inſtruments of arts framed; by them we enjoy the benefits of other's wits; we can diſcourſe with Plato, Ariſtotle, Hippocrates, and other ancients, though at ſuch a diſtance from us. Now that the configuration of parts is not the cauſe of the uſe of them afterwards, as the lion's paw of his courage, the bull's horns

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Gaſſend. tom. ii. ſect. 3. memb. poſt. l. ii. c. 3.

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horns of his fierceneſs, or the ſlenderneſs of the hart of its fearfulneſs, appears by this, becauſe the young ones of the ſeveral kinds of animals, before their parts are grown up, ſtrive to make the ſame uſe of them which the others do. As Galen ſaith, he had often ſeen a bull-calf puſhing with his head before any horns were grown out, and a colt kicking when his hoofs were yet tender, and a young boar defending himſelf with his jaws before he had any tuſks; which is an evident argument that the parts were deſigned for the uſe, and not the uſe to follow the parts. *So*, ſaith he, *take three eggs, one of an eagle, another of a duck, and a third of a ſerpent, and after they are hatched through a moderate heat, we ſhall find, when they are but newly hatched, the two firſt will be ſtriving to fly before they have wings, and the third endeavouring to creep away on its belly; and if you breed them up to greater perfection, and bring them into the open air, you will preſently ſee the young eagle mounting into the air, the duck quoddling in a pool, and the ſerpent creep under ground.* Afterwards he comes particularly to handle the ſeveral parts of man's body, and firſt begins with the hand; and ſhews in each part that it were impoſſible to have framed them with greater conveniency for their ſeveral uſes than they have. The uſe of the hand is to take hold of any thing which man can uſe: now there being things of ſuch different ſizes which men may uſe, it had been impoſſible for the hand, if it had been one entire thing, and undivided, that it could have held things greater or leſſer than itſelf, but it muſt have been equal to it. But now as the fingers are placed and divided, they are equally fit for laying hold of objects of any ſize or quantity; for the leaſt things, as a barley-corn, are taken up with the fore-finger and the thumb; things ſomewhat bigger are taken up by the ſame, but not by the extremities of them as before; things ſomewhat bigger than theſe, with the thumb, fore-finger, and middle finger; and ſo on by degrees, till at laſt the whole hand

hand is uſed; ſo that the diviſion of the hand into fingers is neceſſary. Neither were this enough, but the very poſition of the fingers, as they are, is neceſſary too; for they had been uſeleſs, if they had been all divided in a right line; for the firmeſt hold is either circular, or at leaſt in two oppoſite points: but now this is provided for by the poſition of the thumb, which may equally join with any of the fingers in taking hold of any thing. After this, he largely ſhews the particular neceſſity of the ſoftneſs, roundneſs of the fleſh, and nails on the tops of the fingers, and the ſpecial uſefulneſs of theſe; and then comes to the bones of the fingers, how neceſſary they are for firm hold; and if there had been but one bone in each finger, they would have ſerved only for thoſe things which we take up when they are extended: but now ſeeing they have three ſeveral joints, they are fitted for all kinds of things; for when we bow our fingers, we uſe them as though they had no bones at all, and when we ſtretch them out, as though they were all but one entire bone; and the ſeveral inflections of the joints ſerve for all kind of figures. And then he ſhews the neceſſity of the fleſh within the fingers, and on either ſide of them, and upon them; and ſo with wonderful accuracy handles the magnitude, number, figure of the bones, and nature of the joints of the fingers, and then the tendons and muſcles belonging to the ſeveral fingers; which after he hath diſcourſed on through his firſt book, he concludes it with the manifeſt inconveniency which would follow in the hand, were not every thing in it in that exact magnitude, poſition, and figure in which it is. With the ſame exactneſs he goes through all the parts of the body, handling in the ſecond book all that belongs to the arm, in the third the legs, in the fourth and fifth the organs of nutrition, in the ſixth and ſeventh the lungs, in the eighth and ninth the head, in the tenth the peculiar and admirable fabric of the eyes, in the

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eleventh the other parts of the face, in the twelfth the parts of the back, and ſo in the thirteenth, in the fourteenth and fifteenth the genitals, in the ſixteenth the arteries, veins, and nerves, and in the laſt the peculiar diſpoſition and figure of all theſe parts, and the uſefulneſs of the whole deſign; which is as great as can be in any work whatſoever, which is for us to take notice of the admirable wiſdom of God in contriving the ſeveral parts of the body of man. So that that whole book contains in it a moſt full and pregnant demonſtration of a Deity, which every man carries about with him in the ſtructure of his body; on which account men need not go out of themſelves to find proof of a Deity, whether they conſider their minds or their bodies; of which it may be more truly ſaid, than Heraclitus of old did of his ſtove, *Etiam hic Dii ſunt.* So that of all perſons I ſhould moſt wonder at thoſe, whoſe employment particularly leads them to the underſtanding the parts and nature of man's body, if the proverb be not a great injury to them; ſince they have fuller inſight into this demonſtration of a Deity in the fabric of man's body, than many others who converſe only with ſome jejune and ſapleſs writings. And certainly, whatever is imagined to the contrary by men of weak underſtandings, the beſt way to cure the world of atheiſm, is true philoſophy, or a ſearch into the natures of things; which the more deep and profound it is, the more impoſſible will it be found to explicate all the phenomena of nature by mere matter and motion. It was wiſely obſerved of a great perſon and philoſopher, that a narrow and ſlight inſpection into nature inclined men of weak heads to atheiſm; but a more thorough inſight into the cauſes of things made them more evidently ſee the neceſſary dependance of things on the great and wiſe Creator of them. A little knowledge of philoſophy is apt to make men's heads dizzy, and then in danger of falling into the gulf of atheiſm: but a more careful and diligent view of it brings

Ariſtot. de Part. Anim. l. i.

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brings them into ſobriety and their right wits again. Such a ſlight inſpection had the followers of Epicurus into the nature of things; for when they found how in the preſent ſtate of the world the various motion and configuration of the particles of matter would handſomely ſalve many appearances of nature, they, drunk with the ſucceſs, reel preſently into an infinite ſpace, and there imagine they behold infinite worlds made of the concretion of atoms; and ever ſince their eyes have been ſo duſted with theſe little atoms, that they could ſee nothing elſe in the world but them. Which how groſs and unreaſonable it is, will appear from our preſent ſubject; for who but Lucretius or Epicurus could ever think that our noſtrils were at firſt faſhioned as they are merely by the violent impulſe of the air within, which would force itſelf a paſſage out? But how came the air into the body before it was forced out? Did it break open the lips, make all that round cavity in the mouth, for a paſſage through the *aſpera arteria?* But if when it was in, it would come out again, was not the mouth wide enough to let it go? or did the firſt man ſhut his mouth on purpoſe to find another vent for the air? If ſo, how chance the force of the air did not carry away the *epiglottis?* Or if it got ſafely up to the noſe, how came it not to force a paſſage out about the eyes, rather than to go down ſo low firſt? But if we believe theſe rare contrivers of man's body, all the inward veſſels of the body were made by the courſe of water, as channels are. But how is it poſſible to imagine that the œſophagus and the ſtomach ſhould be ſo curiouſly contrived by the mere force of water; and that all the inteſtines ſhould be made only as channels, to let it out again when it was once in? But how comes then ſuch a kind of reciprocation and periſtaltic motion in thoſe veſſels? How come the ſeveral coats of them to be ſo firm? If it had been only a forced paſſage, it would have been direct and through the ſubſtance of the parts,

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as we find it to be in all forced paſſages in the body of the earth. Beſides, if the water received into the ſtomach forced the paſſage through the guts, how comes it not to run in the channel it had made for itſelf? Or did it not like that paſſage when other things came into it, and therefore found out a more ſecret one into the bladder? But if that were made by the water, how came it to be ſo full of membranes, and ſo ſubject to dilatation? Thus ridiculous will men make themſelves, rather than ſhew themſelves men in owning and adoring that infinitely wiſe and powerful God, who *orders all things in the world according to the counſel of his will.* What can be more plain and evident than the peculiar uſefulneſs of the ſeveral parts of man's body is? What other intent can be imagined that man is formed with a mouth, but only for taking in of nouriſhment, and for receiving and letting forth of air? or that an infant is ſo ready to open his mouth, but that there are breaſts and milk for him to ſuck, in order to his nouriſhment? Why ſhould the œſophagus be ſo hollow, and the ſtomach ſo wide, but that one was provided for the better conveyance of the meat down, and the other for the fermentation of it? Whence come all the other veſſels to be ſo conveniently placed, were it not for the diſtribution of nouriſhment into the ſeveral parts, or for conveying away the excrements of it? Can any one think that the ſeveral muſcles and tendons ſhould be placed in the more ſolid parts, for any other end than for the better motion of them? Or that the nerves ſhould be derived from the brain, into the ſeveral parts of the body, for any other deſign than to be the inſtruments of ſenſe and motion? Or that the continual motion of the heart ſhould be for any other purpoſe than for receiving and diſtributing of the blood through the arteries into the parts of the body? Or that the eye, with all its curious fabric, ſhould be only accidentally employed in ſeeing? Theſe things are ſo plain, that however

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however the Epicureans may more eaſily loſe themſelves, and deceive others, in explaining the appearances of nature in ſome inanimate beings, yet when they come with their blind concourſe of atoms to give an account of the parts of animals, they miſerably befool themſelves, and expoſe themſelves only to contempt and pity. It were eaſy to multiply examples in this kind, but I ſhall only mention one thing more, which is, if all the parts of man's body have no higher original than the concourſe of atoms in the firſt man and woman, by what were the umbilical veſſels formed, whereby the child in the womb receives its nouriſhment? By what atoms was the paſſage of the *ſuccus nutritius* framed from the mother to the child? How come thoſe veſſels to cloſe up ſo naturally upon the birth of the child, and it to ſeek its nouriſhment in quite another way? Will the particles of matter, which by their concretion formed the firſt pair, ſalve this too? Thus ſtill we ſee how impoſſible it is (to go no further than ourſelves) to give any tolerable account of things, without an infinite Power and Being which produced all theſe things; and hath left ſo plain an inſcription of himſelf upon the works of nature, that none but thoſe who ſhut their eyes can abſtain from ſeeing it. CHAP. I.

XVII. 3. I come now to the third evidence of a Deity, which is, *That there are ſome beings in the world which cannot depend upon matter or motion*; i. e. that there are ſome ſpiritual and immaterial ſubſtances or beings (for if the thing be acknowledged, it is unbecoming a man to contend about words); the conſequence of this for the proving a Deity, neither hath been, nor I uppoſe will be denied, by ſuch who queſtion an infinite Being; the ſame principles leading to the denying and the proof of both, and immaterial beings being the ſtrongeſt proof that there is ſomething above matter in the world. If there be then ſuch things in the world which matter and motion cannot be the cauſes of, then there are certainly ſpiritual and

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immaterial beings; and that I ſhall make appear both as to the minds of men, and ſome extraordinary effects which are produced in the world.

1. I begin with the nature of the ſoul of man. And herein I muſt confine myſelf to thoſe arguments which directly prove my preſent purpoſe, and on that account muſt quit all thoſe common arguments to prove the ſoul's immortality from the attributes of God; for all theſe do ſuppoſe the exiſtence of a Deity as already evident: neither can I rely with ſafety on the way which ſome have taken to prove the immortality of the ſoul merely from the phenomena of ſenſation, which they endeavour to prove cannot be performed by mere matter and motion. For granting all this, yet the utmoſt that can be proved by it is no greater immortality in our ſouls than in the ſouls of brutes; and in the ſenſe in which that is admitted, I ſuppoſe an Epicurean will not deny the ſoul of man to be immortal, as Demonax in Lucian ſaid, when he was aſked whether the ſoul were immortal or no: *It is* (ſaid he), *but as all things elſe are*; for thoſe who make the ſoul to be nothing but ſome more ſubtle and active particles of matter, do not think that upon death they are annihilated, but that only they are diſperſed and diſſipated; or, in the Platoniſt's phraſe, may *return to the ſoul of the world.* Theſe ways I cannot think to be ſufficient probations of ſuch a ſpiritual and immaterial being in man which we now enquire for; much leſs can I make uſe of ſo precarious and infirm an hypotheſis as preexiſtence, which makes men apt to ſuſpect the cogency of ſuch reaſons which tend to prove the immortality of the ſoul; which are linked with a ſuppoſition, not only inevident either to ſenſe or reaſon, but likewiſe needleſs and impertinent. For I know no one argument which doth directly prove the immateriality of the ſoul, that doth in the leaſt infer any neceſſity of pre-exiſtence, but on the ſame accounts it will prove the ſoul's eternity. Being therefore

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fore thus at liberty to enquire into the nature of the soul considered in herself, our only way must be to find out such peculiar properties in the soul of man, which cannot be salved, on supposition there were nothing else but matter and motion in the world. Supposing, then, that all sensation in man doth arise from corporeal motion, which is so strongly asserted by the modern philosophers, and that the highest conceptions which depend on sense can amount no higher than imagination, which is evident; if it can then be proved that there is a principle of action in man which proceeds in a different way of operation than sensation doth, and that there are such operations of the soul which are not imaginations, it will be then clear that there is a principle in man higher than matter and motion. Now, although it be a task sufficiently difficult to explain the manner of sensation itself in a mere mechanical way, supposing no higher principle than mere matter, yet it will appear far more difficult, nay impossible, without a spiritual or immaterial being, to salve such appearances in man which transcend the power of imagination; which will appear by these following operations of the mind, which every one who hath it may find within himself. CHAP. I.

1. *Correcting the errors of imagination.* For if all our perceptions were nothing else but the images of corporeal things left in the brain, the judgment of the mind must of necessity be according to the impressions which are made upon the organs of sense. But now if our minds can and do form apprehensions of things quite different from those which are conveyed by sense, there must be a higher principle of knowledge in man than imagination is; for which the common instance of the just magnitude of the sun is very plain. If we judge according to the image which is conveyed to the brain by our eyes, we can never imagine the sun to be bigger than he seems to us to be; nay, though the sight be advan-

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taged by the help of teleſcopes, it cannot receive ſuch an image or idea of the ſun which anſwers to its juſt magnitude, viz. that it is 160 times bigger than the earth. From whence now comes this apprehenſion of the bigneſs of the ſun above that proportion which can poſſibly come in at our ſenſes? If it be ſaid, *That, by the obſervation of the leſſening of objects according to the proportion of diſtance, the mind may come to underſtand how much bigger the ſun may be than he ſeems*, I grant it; but withal enquire how the imagination comes to have proportions and diſtances which are mere reſpects, and can have no corporeal phantaſms whereby to be repreſented to it? So that by this very way of ratiocination, it is evident that there is ſome principle in man beyond imagination. Again, when the mind, by ratiocination, hath proceeded thus far, and finds the ſun to be ſo great, what idea is there of this magnitude in the mind? The mind cannot fix itſelf on any thing, but it muſt have an idea of it. From whence comes this idea? Not from corporeal phantaſms; for none of them could ever convey the due magnitude of the ſun to the mind, and therefore the forming of this idea muſt be a pure act of intellection, which corrects the errors of imagination, and is a principle above it. So in the ſight of a ſtick, when under water, the repreſentation of it by the ſenſe to imagination is as crooked; for corporeal motion carries things to the eye without any judgment upon them; the eye conveys the image to the brain; and, according to the rules of corporeal perception, muſt preſently take every thing for true which is conveyed thither. Now from what principle is it that this error of our ſenſes is corrected? So in many other things wherein our imaginations are quite puzzled; and when we go according to them, it is impoſſible to apprehend things as our reaſon tells us they are. Thus as to the Antipodes our imaginations are wholly of the mind of the ancients, that the Antipodes to us muſt needs

needs be in danger of knocking their heads againſt the ſtars, and if they go upon any thing, it muſt be their heads, and that that part of the heavens which is in the other hemiſphere is below us: theſe are pertinacious errors of imagination while we adhere to that, and are only corrigible by our reaſon, which makes it evident to be otherwiſe. Beſides, there are many things our reaſon and underſtanding inform us that they may be, and yet our imaginations can form no idea of them. Let an Epicurean philoſopher try the power of his imagination in his *inane* or *infinite empty ſpace*, and he will ſoon find, that as ſtrong as his fancy is, it will ſoon tire and retreat, as not being able to courſe through ſo unimaginable a ſpace. So for eternal duration our reaſon tells us the thing is poſſible, but when our imaginations begin to fardle up ſome conceptions of it, they are preſently tying both ends together; which will make a ſtrange idea of eternity: the caſe is the ſame in the infinite diviſibility of quantity, which Epicurus was ſomewhat aware of when he denied the thing. But how many mathematical problems are there which will jade our imaginations preſently, and yet our reaſon ſtands ſtill, and aſſures us of the poſſibility of the things; as in *two lines coming nearer ſtill to each other, and yet never meeting*; and in many other things, which moſt clearly evince that there is a higher faculty in man which exceeds matter and motion, when it is able thus to correct the faults and to ſupply the defects of imagination. CHAP. I.

2. *Reflex acts of the mind upon itſelf argue a higher principle than imagination.* That there are ſuch things, is evident to any one who hath any uſe of cogitation; and if any one doubt of it, his very doubting argues he hath reflex acts; for he could not doubt whether he had or no, but by reflection upon himſelf. Now that reflex acts ſhould be cauſed through matter and motion, or through mere imagination, is unconceivable; for we ſee no matter can act upon itſelf: XVIII.

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ſelf: indeed one part of extended matter may act upon another, but not purely upon itſelf. The extremities of the fingers can never feel themſelves, though they can touch each other; neither can imagination reflect on itſelf: for that proceeding upon corporeal images, muſt have ſuch a repreſentation from the ſenſes of what it acts upon. Now what image, of itſelf, can be conveyed to the imagination through the external organs of ſenſe? The eye may ſee through the motion of the objects of ſight preſſing upon it; but how can it ſee that it ſees? So the imagination receives the images conveyed to the brain; but what ſhop hath it to make new ones in of itſelf, and ſo be guilty of the greateſt idolatry, or worſhipping its own image? But though the imagination cannot thus reflect, yet we find ſuch a principle within us that is very apt to retire into itſelf, and recollect things which could never have been conſerved ſo long in that ſhop of ſhadows, the imagination. For if imagination be nothing elſe but, as a modern philoſopher defines it, *conception remaining, and a little and little decaying from and after the act of ſenſe, like the motion of water after a ſtone is thrown into it*, how is it poſſible that at ſo great a diſtance of years, as we commonly find, the image of a thing may be retrieved with as much facility and freſhneſs as to circumſtances, as if it were but new done? And that account which he gives of remembrance is very weak and inſufficient, when he tells us, that *remembrance is nothing elſe but the miſſing of parts, which every man expecteth ſhould ſucceed after they have a conception of the whole*. For according to this, it is impoſſible for the mind to retrieve any object without mutilation of it; and ſo there cannot poſſibly be a recollecting of all circumſtances, when an object is once paſt, and the motion begins to decay. But all this while we underſtand nothing by what means this decaying motion ſhould continue ſo long as our memory can fetch things back, or by what means an object, when once

Hobbes's Human Nature, ch. 3. ſect. 1.

once paſt, can be recovered again, if memory be nothing elſe but decaying motion. Such perplexities muſt needs ariſe, when men will undertake to ſalve the inward operations of the ſoul by mere motion: but is it not evident, that many times when the mind is employed about other things, ſome phantaſms of things long ago paſt will come and preſent themſelves to the mind, with as much clearneſs as if new done? Whereas if memory were decaying motion, the longer paſt, the more impoſſible would it be to recover any thing: but do we not find that many old men will better remember the circumſtances of many things they did in their childhood, than a year or two before? Beſides, we ſee what quickneſs and vivacity there is in our intellectual faculties above corporeal motion, with what facility the mind turns itſelf from one object to another, how ſuddenly it rangeth the whole world; how it trips over mountains, croſſeth the ocean, mounts to the ſkies, and at laſt quarries upon itſelf, and all in the twinkling of an intellectual eye. As quick as the eye of the body is, the mind far exceeds it, and can withdraw the imagination from attending the organs of ſenſe: thus do men who have their minds much fixed, fix their eyes too; and yet afterwards can ſcarce tell themſelves what they have looked on all that while. Sometimes the mind fits and compares phantaſms together, and ſports itſelf in ſorting them into ſeveral ranks and orders, and making matches between ſuch things which are ſure to have no affinity with each other; which are thence called *entia rationis*, or the creatures of the mind. And can all theſe, and many other ſuch operations which men are conſcious to themſelves of, be nothing elſe but the motion of ſome phlegmatic matter, the reaction of the brain, and the mere effects of imagination?

3. *The profound ſpeculations of the mind argue a power far above imagination and corporeal motion.* I wonder how

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how Epicurus's ſoul, when, if we believe him, it was made up of atoms, could ever imagine an infinite vacuity? Could mere atoms ever diſpute whether they were atoms or no? For I doubt not but Epicurus was fain to argue much againſt himſelf, before he could perſuade himſelf to ſo ſtupendous a piece of folly. Were there nothing in man but mere corporeal motion, whence came the diſpute, whether the ſoul were corporeal or no? Can atoms frame ſyllogiſms in mood and figure? and mere matter argue *pro* and *con*, whether it be matter or ſomething elſe? What kind of aerial particles were their ſouls compounded of, who firſt fancied themſelves to be immaterial? What ſtrange agitations of matter were thoſe which firſt made men think of an eternal ſtate? which thoughts have ever ſince ſo ſtuck upon theſe little ſpherical bodies, that they could never yet diſburthen themſelves of them. Whence come ſuch amazing fears, ſuch dreadful apprehenſions, ſuch ſinking thoughts of their future condition, in minds that would fain eaſe themſelves by believing that death would put a period both to ſoul and body? Whence, on the other ſide, come ſuch encouraging hopes, ſuch confident expectations, ſuch comfortable prepoſſeſſions of their future ſtate, in the ſouls of good men, when their bodies are neareſt to the grave? Seneca, who was ſomewhat dubious ſometimes as to the future condition of the ſoul, yet could tell his dear Lucilius with what pleaſure he could think of it; and could elſewhere ſay of the ſoul, *Et hoc habet argumentum divinitatis ſuæ quod illum divina delectant, nec ut alienis intereſt, ſed ut ſuis: the ſoul had that mark of divinity in it, that it was moſt pleaſed with Divine ſpeculations, and converſed with them as with matters which nearly concerned it.* And when it hath once viewed the dimenſions of the heavens, *contemnit domicilii prioris anguſtias*, it was aſhamed of the cottage it dwelt in: nay, were it not for theſe ſpeculations, *non fuerat operæ pretium naſci*, it had not been worth while for the

Senec. Præf. ad Quæſt. Natur.

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the ſoul to have been in the body; and as he goes on, *detrahe hoc ineſtimabile bonum, non eſt vita tanti ut ſudem, ut æſtuem.* Could there be now ſo great an Epicuriſm in contemplation, were the ſoul of man of Epicurus's mould, a mere complexion of atoms? Would dull and heavy matter ever have delighted to have ſearched ſo much into the cauſes of things, to have gone over the world in its ſpeculations, and found more ſweetneſs in knowledge, than the little Epicure the bee taſtes in his choiceſt flowers? Epicurus's own philoſophy is a demonſtration againſt himſelf. If his ſoul had not been of a purer nature than he fancied, he would never have made his ſtudy of philoſophy a part of his Epicuriſm. Had his ſoul been ſuch atoms as he fancied, when his brain had been well heated at his ſtudy, thoſe more vivid and ſpirituous particles, like the ſpirits of wine, had been in danger of evaporation, and leaving the more lumpiſh matter to complete his work. Of all perſons, I moſt admire that philoſophers, who make ſo much uſe of their underſtandings, ſhould ſo ungratefully requite them, and ſerve them like old horſes; when they have made them do all the ſervice they could, turn them into the highways, and let them die in a ditch. But yet all philoſophers have not been ſo unthankful; ſome have underſtood the worth of their ſouls, and aſſerted it: if they have not uſed too high, i. e. Platonical expreſſions of it, making it a particle, not of matter, but of the Divine nature itſelf, a little deity in a cottage, that ſtays here a while, and returns to that upper region from whence it came. As Manilius ſpeaks,

An dubium eſt habitare Deum ſub pectore noſtro?
In cœlumque redire animas, cœloque venire?

Manil. l. iv. v. 886. Ed. Bentl.

And while the ſoul is here in its cage, it is continually fluttering up and down, and delighteth to look out now at this part, and then at another, to take a view by

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BOOK III. by degrees of the whole univerſe; as the ſame poet goes on,

Id. v. 893. ——*Quid mirum, noſcere mundum*
Si poſſunt homines, quibus eſt & mundus in ipſis:
Exemplumque Dei quiſque eſt in imagine parva?

The ſoul hath nothing more delightful to it than knowledge; and no knowledge ſo pleaſing and ſatisfactory as of him whoſe image and ſuperſcription it bears, who makes himſelf moſt known to ſuch as enquire after him.

Id. v. 917. ——*Seque ipſum inculcat & offert*
Ut bene cognoſci poſſit.

I conclude this with that of Seneca, in that excellent preface to his Natural Queſtions. *O quam contempta res eſt homo niſi ſupra humana ſe erexerit! What a pitiful thing is man, were it not that his ſoul was apt to ſoar above theſe earthly things!* And by this aptneſs to ſoar ſo high above theſe terrene objects, and to converſe with ſo much freedom with ſpiritual beings, as well as abſtracted notions, we may certainly infer that our rational ſouls are of a far more noble and refined nature than that more feculent principle of imagination, which always converſes in *fæce Romuli*, and can go no further than our ſenſes carry it. And thus I have made good the firſt proof, that there is ſomething above matter and motion in the world, which is from that immaterial being which is in man.

XIX. 2. The next evidence which we have of a Being above matter and motion, is, from *the extraordinary effects which have been in nature.* I ſpeak not now merely of ſuch things which by their natures and effects are manifeſted to proceed from ſome beings which bear ill-will to mankind, multitudes of which are related by men philoſophical and inquiſitive, with ſuch enumerations of circumſtances, and particular evidences that they are not mere impoſtures, that one

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one may on the ſame grounds queſtion any matter of fact which himſelf did not ſee, as ſuch relations which are delivered by perſons without intereſt or deſign, and ſuch as were able to judge of the truth of circumſtances; ſuch are both ancient and modern philoſophers, phyſicians, ſtateſmen, and others. Neither ſhall I inſiſt on ſuch prodigies, which ofttimes preſage revolutions in ſtates, if we believe Machiavel himſelf, who in a whole chapter deſignedly proves it; and profeſſeth himſelf utterly to ſeek for the cauſes of them, unleſs they may be attributed to ſome ſpirits and intelligences in the air, which give the world notice of ſuch things to come. But thoſe things which I ſuppoſe have the moſt clear and undoubted evidence of true and undoubted miracles (the matters of fact being affirmed by eye-witneſſes, who ſealed the truth of them with their lives), are thoſe recorded in the holy Scriptures; which there are only two ways to evade, either by queſtioning the truth of the things, which I ſuppoſe in the precedent book we have proved with as much rational evidence as any thing of that nature is capable of, or elſe that the things therein recorded might be ſalved without a Deity. For which only two ways have been excogitated by atheiſtical ſpirits, either attributing them to the power and influence of the ſtars, the foundations of which fond and abſurd opinion have been taken away by thoſe many writers, who have rationally confuted the whole art of Judicial Aſtrology, or elſe that they are done by mere power of imagination, which is the way of Avicenna and ſome other Arabic writers, which is ſo wild an effect of the power of imagination, that nothing doth ſo much demonſtrate the irregular motions of it, as ſuch an opinion doth; and is ſufficiently derided and refuted by Pomponatius himſelf. Now then it being an acknowledged principle in nature, *that every thing continues in the courſe it is in, till ſomething more powerful put it out*, if

Machiav. Diſput. l. i. c. 56.

Vid. D. H. More's Myſtery of Godlineſs, l. vii. c. 14, 15, 16, 17.

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if then ſuch things have been in the world which have been real alterations of the courſe of nature, as the *ſun's ſtanding ſtill in the time of Joſhua*, then there muſt be ſomething above matter and motion, and conſequently that there is a God.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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